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One man's mission ... p.16

Wisdom provides no comfort ... p.14

59th year of publication

Canada embraces Kyoto – maybe

Harry der Nederlanden

On Feb. 16, the Kyoto Protocol, an agreement signed by 140 nations to limit greenhouse gas emissions went into effect. The treaty targets CO2 and 5 other gases produced mainly by the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil because these are generally thought to be responsible for global warming. Although there are still many scientists who dissent, a broad consensus has emerged among scientists (not without a political component) that these gases trap heat in the atmosphere and have contributed to global warming. Kyoto does not address other forms of air pollution; it is a very specific treaty with very specific targets.

The Academy of Sciences has warned that global warming leads to numerous harmful affects: unsettled weather, storms, droughts, melting of the polar ice cap, rising ocean levels and resulting flooding of coastal areas, and altered habitats for animals. Some scientists have speculated that changes in ocean temperature could disrupt the Gulf Stream, the warm Atlantic current that is pumped northward past England and Europe, and that Europe might become much colder. Other areas would become warmer and become vulnerable to tropical diseases. Almost all such scenarios remain highly speculative, however, because of the huge

See p. 2...

We've come a long way since belching chimneys symbolized progress

North Korea – pressure or appeasement

Harry der Nederlanden

North Korea has repeatedly made headlines in recent months by announcing that it has achieved nuclear capability and by, in effect, challenging the U.S. to do something about it. News reports often give the impression that North Korea has adopted its aggressive stance because it has been unfairly targeted by the U.S. by being ranked with the infamous "axis of evil."

Some Korea experts wonder whether the announcement is true, because, according to one South Korean official, Kim Jong-Il, the "Dear Leader" whose picture is posted everywhere in the country, has made the claim ten times in the last two years. Most, however, agree that North Korea probably has developed some kind of nuclear capability.

The first negotiations on the nuclear issue came in 1994, when inspectors, first admitted two years earlier, noticed that plutonium was missing. This was at a time when North Korea was experiencing acute famine, and the threat garnered increased aid from the U.S. and Japan, oil as well as food, in return for promises that it would not use fuel from its nuclear reactor to develop weapons.

About ten years later, Kim is still exploiting the nuclear threat to extort aid for a regime that while extolling the virtues of self-reliance cannot feed its own people.

Kim Il Sung monument

American hostility

Six-way talks, involving China and Japan, were broken off by North Korea in mid-February because of "American hostility," said the North Koreans. Although American officials have carefully muted their criticisms of the regime in recent months, apparently Condoleeza Rice said something uncomplimentary in one of her speeches. But this is seen as a mere pretext. Kim has been demanding direct talks with Washington.

According to the *Washington Post*: "North Korea has sought billions of dollars in energy, economic aid and loans in exchange for giving up its nuclear ambitions."

The Bush administration has, however, refused to sit down in face to face negotiations until after North Korea has recanted its actions and again admits inspectors to its nuclear facilities.

The present situation is often described as a "stand-off" between North Korea and the U.S. precipitated by threats from the Bush administration, but the troubles began much earlier. North Korea violated a UN non-proliferation treaty it had signed and became liable to sanctions that are part of the treaty. Instead of suffering sanctions, however, Kim has been able to turn the violation to his advantage. The six-way talks are an effort to bring the country back into compliance so that sanctions will not be necessary.

Sanctions would be extremely hard on an already underfed, impoverished people. From the beginning the North Korean regime has been harsh and destructive in the extreme, bringing not just dislocation, repression and poverty, but also starvation on a large scale. Prior to the 90's the regime relied on infusions of aid from its communist neighbors, Russia and China. Since then it has managed to blackmail South Korea, Japan and the U.S. for the wherewithal to keep it in business.

The U.S., however, has been reluctant to keep giving aid, for the regime allows no transparency about where the aid is going. There are strong indications that food aid, for example, is used for political purposes, going first to loyal supporters of Kim. And even during times of famine, over one-quarter of the country's budget still went to the military. Oxfam and CARE pulled out of the country because they were not permitted to distribute food directly to the people. The government insisted that it, not the aid agencies, must be the distributor.

According to reports, North Korea is again facing shortages, for Kim recently announced a big push to increase rice and potato production (reminiscent of similar drives under other communist regimes). The UN estimates that over 6 million North Koreans will need food aid this year.

See **Korea** *p. 3...*

Kyoto ... *continued from p.1*

number of factors involved.

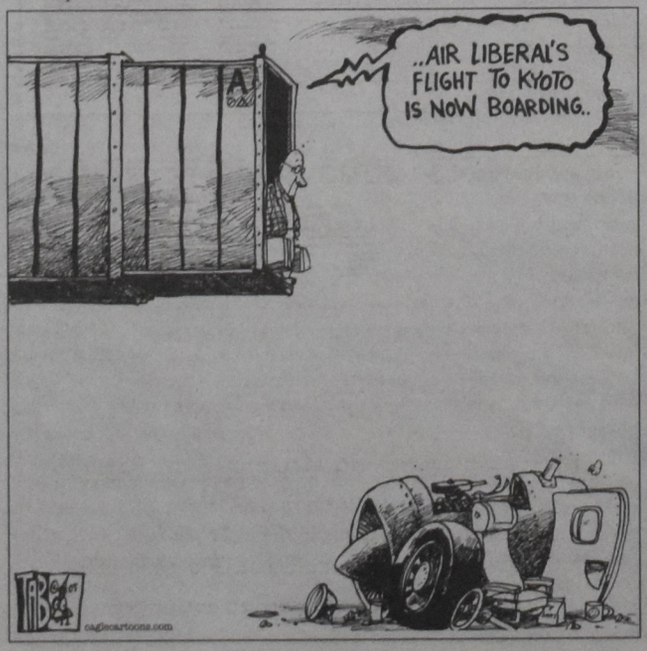
Although 140 nations ratified the Kyoto accord, only 35 of the signatories are affected. Only the 35 richest industrial nations have agreed to cut back on greenhouse gas emissions. Kyoto took as its base line the year 1990. The 35 nations agreed to cut back emissions an average of 5 percent. The Canadian government, led by Chretien at the time, signed on to a 6 percent rollback. The U.S., which initially helped draft the treaty, did not sign the protocol, nor did Australia. Both cited the fact that China and India, with rapidly expanding economies and therefore rising emissions, were not held to any goals. Russia was also a holdout until last year, when it was persuaded to sign up by being offered incentives like membership in the World Trade Organization.

The U.S. produces about half of all greenhouse gases, largely from vehicles and coal-burning power plants. China is second, but in the next couple of decades it is expected to pass even the U.S. as the worst offender. Recently it passed the U.S. as the world's biggest consumer. The per capita emissions in the U.S. are about 2.5 those of Europe. Canada's per capita emissions are not much better. At recent meetings in Buenos Aires, Canada was named as one of the worst offenders for none compliance.

No developing countries, where emissions are estimated to be 8 to 10 times higher (per GDP) than in developed countries, were asked to impose controls. It was reasoned that developed countries like the U.S. have contributed most to the crisis in the past and therefore should have to shoulder the burden of clean-up. Moreover, they are the ones with the financial resources to develop cleaner technology and alternative energy sources. The cuts in emissions are supposed to be met by 2008 and sustained until 2012, when a new goals will have to be hammered out, this time also for developing countries.

So Canada will have to reach its goal of a 6 percent cut of 1990 levels three years from now. The trouble with that scenario is that since 1997, when the treaty was drawn up, Canada has made no progress toward its goal. On the contrary, emissions have risen in the interim, so the roll-back will be even steeper, and since little or nothing has been done since Ottawa signed on in 2002, it will have fewer years to make the grade.

Why did the U.S. opt out after the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the treaty? Under the Clinton administration the U.S. cooperated to work out the details of Kyoto. However, critics argued that while Europe and Britain would have no problems meeting their goals, the 7 percent cut set for the U.S. would result in the loss of millions of jobs and a loss of competitive advantage to Europe. The 1990 base line set by the treaty came at a good time for Europe, for it was just switching over from coal-burning power plants to natural gas and many of its more polluting industries were being phased out as inefficient.



In the U.S., on the other hand, 1990 marked the beginning of an economic boom, so its economy was expanding. So the U.S. saw no way to meet its goals without taking punishing measures.

Sam Thernstrom, an environmental issues scholar interviewed on the Lehrer Newshour, said that in order to meet Kyoto limits, the U.S. would have to cut its emissions by 30 percent, with "catastrophic effects" on its economy (and Canada's). The U.S., he said, hoped to cut back on greenhouse gas emissions by developing clean technology, such as hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles like the Toyota Prius. Vehicles account for about half of such gases in North America.

Of the countries that have signed the protocol, there are many that will not meet their pledges. According to Jeffrey Simpson (*Globe and Mail*, Feb. 16), both Spain and Portugal, for example, are still over 40 percent above 1990 levels, while their target is a 7 percent roll-back. Japan, which has taken Kyoto more seriously than any other country, has admitted that it will have great difficulty meeting its goal.

Carbon trading

Kyoto, however, provides for something called "carbon trading." Heavy offenders can buy the right to keep polluting from nations which have, for whatever reason, been able to meet and exceed their goals. Because of its badly lagging economy, Russia, for example, was expected to have lots of credits to sell to Europe or Japan, but its economy has been growing of late, so it will probably not be sitting as pretty as expected. Last year Japan bought up over 40 percent of all carbon credits in an attempt to meet its goals.

Some have objected to the "carbon trading" mechanism because it does nothing to help cut back on emissions. Carbon trading allows a company that has been unable to limit its emissions to buy "credits" from another company that has cut back. So it is an innovative way of taxing those who produce CO2. However, it has become a headache for accountants in Europe, since such credits now count as assets or income. A recent report in *The Telegraph* says that emissions trading will raise electricity prices to European consumers by 15-20 percent.

Todd Stern, one of the original Kyoto negotiators for the U.S. under Clinton, called Kyoto "a substantial achievement." but he said: "The real point of Kyoto was never the size of these first emission cuts, but rather the setting of an initial price on carbon (by capping emissions), thereby forcing businesses and consumers to start considering greater energy efficiency and lover-carbon energy resources." (*Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 16)

Canada and Kyoto

The Canadian government under the Liberals has always been pro-Kyoto. Both Chretien and Martin have lauded it and made it part of the Liberal environmental platform. But beyond this rhetorical flourish little has been done. Money has been spent, millions in fact, but most of it has gone to hype – advertising and "educating" the public.

Jeffrey Simpson points out that each Canadian is responsible for the emission of about 5 tons of greenhouse gasses. About one-half from our vehicles and one-fourth from heating our homes. Under Kyoto, each and every Canadian is expected to cut that by one ton or 20 percent. That would add up to a cut of about 32 megatons. But as a nation our government has committed us to reducing our output by about 240 megatons. So over 200 megatons will have to come from industry and business.

On the personal level, Canadians have by and large ignored government ads urging them to greater efficiency. On the corporate level, little or nothing has yet been accomplished. In fact, the government has not even come up with a national strategy (at the time of writing), although it says that it has been working on one.

David Anderson, a Liberal MP when Canada ratified the accord, calls it "the most important diplomatic event of our generation" because "there is little doubt that climate change is the greatest single challenge to humanity in this century and beyond."(*Globe and Mail*, Feb. 16)

Actually, there is still quite a bit of doubt about what is the greatest challenge (AIDS, malaria, war, poverty, hunger). There is even still considerable debate about the science of climate change. Without expertise one must take the word of others and weigh counter-claims. Especially over the last few years, however, scientists do generally acknowledge that human beings are having a disproportionate impact on the climate. Since human beings are beginning to outnumber trees, it seems very likely that we're impacting the climate as we're impacting everything else.

Whether on the right or on the left, Canadian commentators have been taking the government to task on Kyoto. From the right, Margaret Went (*Globe and Mail*, Feb. 16) called Canada's signing of the Kyoto protocol an outrageously hypocritical act. While touting the accord's virtues, it has done little or nothing to meet its goals. In fact, she says, we're all hypocrites, because we're unwilling to sacrifice and impose a discipline on ourselves.

Many, like Bob Mills (*Gobe and Mail*, Feb. 16), concede that something must be done about the environment, but ask, "Is Kyoto the right tool to do the job?" Critics point out that draconian measures launched now to meet the 6 percent pledge will mean much higher costs for electricity, transportation and heating, and result in the loss of untold thousands of jobs. (The government has never issued a credible estimate of the cost of Kyoto – a difficult exercise.) It will also mean a loss of competitive edge with the U.S. as well as the up and coming powerhouse – China.

By postponing action Canada has painted itself in a corner. It needs a strong economy to pay for the technology to clean up the environment (and pay for healthcare, etc.); yet, at this point to meet its Kyoto commitment, it will have to dampen the economy.

Along with the global warming consensus, there's another consensus emerging in Canada – that Canada's chances of meeting its pledge by 2012 are about as high as the chance that we'll see an NHL game this season.

Recently, according to the *National Post*, the Liberals have been floating several measures:

- promote research and development into cleaner technology
- build more nuclear power plants
- use tax incentives to encourage business to upgrade
- improve public transportation
- press the auto industry to produce more fuel-efficient cars

Politics

Korea ... *continued from p. 1*

A repressed people

A German doctor, Norbert Vollertsen, who worked in North Korea for a year, reported that the starvation in that country was largely man-made, not natural. The people have no rights, are imprisoned at the whim of the regime, and work under virtual labor camp conditions.

Kim Jong Il in his father's footsteps

Everywhere, he said, he saw children with stunted growth due to malnutrition and numerous orphans. He asked, What happened to all the parents? Many people suffer from psychosomatic illnesses brought on by compulsory drill, innumerable parades, "patriotic" assemblies at 6 in the morning and loudspeakers spewing propaganda wherever they go. The people, as a whole, he concluded, are enervated by hopelessness and despair.

According to a report by Freedom House, "Defectors and refugees have in recent years reported that the regime regularly executes political prisoners, repatriated defectors, military officers accused of spying or other anti-government offenses, and other suspected dissidents.... " Its system of gulags and labor camps is estimated to contain some 200,000 political prisoners, who are, according to reports from South Korea, subject to beatings, torture and public execution.

Human Rights Watch ranks North Korea as the world's most repressive regime.

Religion almost extinguished

Religious freedom is non-existent says Freedom House. There are a handful of church buildings in the capital, but according to a report by Forum 18, these are "show churches,' not home to actual congregations. In a two-part story in *The Observer,* Philip Gourevitch wrote: "Pyongyang is North Korea's model city, full of model schools and model hospitals and model people: residence is reserved for the party's chosen, the political and military elite, the commissars and cadres and their most faithful followers, and the population is regularly cleansed of those deemed ideologically lax, as well as the old, the sick, the disfigured and the lame, who are banished to the provinces and replaced by a fresh crop of loyalists."

Reports do leak out about the existence of Christians in the country, but the Forum 18 report says that "most experts agree that the North Korean totalitarian regime was extremely successful in forcibly eradicating all vestiges of religion" from the country. "Given the highly-controlled atmosphere, it was impossible for religious propagation to take place, even between parents and children." Under constant surveillance and forced to live communally, Christians would even have difficulty having family devotions much less participate in corporate worship.

Nevertheless, a recent report issued by the North Korean government says that besides the churches in the capital Pyongyang there are also over 500 "family worship centres" in the country for Protestant believers. No one has, however, been able to substantiate or deny those claims. Some missionaries contacting North Koreans who have crossed the border into China in search of food say that they hesitate to give Bibles to take back into the country because being caught with one may lead to a death sentence.

Moreover, the various security agencies operate with the principle of collective responsibility. This means that if one member of the family falls under suspicion, every member is held accountable. *The Observer* quotes a North Korean refugee: "The government doesn't just put one or two people in jail -- it puts all the family in jail, wiping everybody out, the innocent along with the guilty, as the broom wipes out the dirt."

Many critics of American policy toward North Korea are sure that by deepening that country's isolation, the U.S. has extended the life of Kim's dictatorship. Others, like the defector Kang Chol-hwan, the grandson of a party loyalist who spent 10 years in a labor camp, despises policies of appeasement. He thinks that if enough pressure is brought to bear, Kim's regime will crumble. "North Korea will collapse faster than Iraq," he said, as quoted in *The Observer*, "because in Iraq they have their Allah, but Kim Jong Il is a weaker self-made god."

Nicholas Kristoff, in a long review in the *New York Review of Books* (Feb. 10), agrees that "it is the worst human rights violator in the world and also the most dangerous possessor of weapons of mass destruction." But citing the examples of China and South Korea, he argues, "If we want to change North Korea, we should not be sanctioning it but sending in Western investors."

The totalitarian regime, however, has consistently spurned any form of openness, deliberately isolating itself to more effectively dominate the minds of its people. Gourevitch describes the country as one huge concentration camp. Do you keep smuggling food into a concentration camp, or do you try to abolish it?

Justice and the making of legal distinctions

Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

OTTAWA, 2013 - The Supreme Court of Canada today ruled unanimously that all legal definitions of everything are unconstitutional. Because they discriminate against whoever and whatever does not conform to them, such definitions violate the equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Parliament has been given 60 days to rewrite all laws to conform to this decision.

This fictitious news report may sound less fanciful now than it would have a few years ago. Two months ago in this space I noted how two 40-year-old Hollywood films effectively illustrated, through the musical comedy medium, the diversity of human society. A family should not be treated as either a bank or the crew of a ship. A family is a family is a family. No one in the audience had any difficulty understanding this obvious truth.

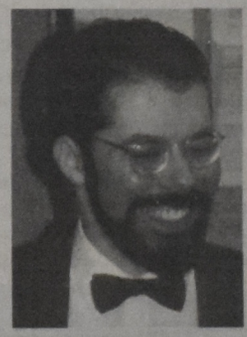
At the start of a new century, created reality has not changed, yet attempts to account for it theoretically have undergone a remarkable narrowing of scope, particularly in the legal community. Paradoxically, however, this narrowing has come under the guise of broadmindedness. In particular, many people, operating under a secularizing mindset, have difficulty with any institution that is not based on voluntary consent. There is great reluctance to admit that some communities have a status prior to the decision of members to be bound by them. This denigration of such communities began already centuries ago with the rise of social contract theory in Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Yet to base all communities on voluntary contract is to undertake to suppress their respective unique characters and tasks. The state is not formed by a social contract, the contrary views of the 18th century political philosophers notwithstanding. The state, or political community, is the latest manifestation of *political authority*, something which has existed since the dawn of history and which is anchored in the jural side of created reality. Wherever there are human beings living together, there is need for an authority to coordinate the diverse activities and communities that arise out of this. The liberal notion that consent is the foundation for human government ignores the inevitability of political authority, which clearly takes precedence.

As for marriage, no amount of legal redefinition will alter the reality of a community whose very existence is anchored in the deep structure of every human society. In this respect, fears that government is capable of abolishing marriage are unfounded. At the same time, where government is unable to recognize the intrinsic character of a community because it fails to conform to a rather wooden interpretation of section 15 of the Charter, the potential for miscarrying justice is great indeed.

People generally do not like slippery slope arguments. However, the law's refusal to acknowledge an intrinsic structure to marriage is not a slippery slope. It is a deliberate omission whose logic is difficult, if not impossible, to contain within the current proposed limits. If marriage is only a tradition and if traditions are subject to change, then there is nothing standing in the way of plural sexual unions, renewable term unions and even non-sexual relationships being labelled marriage. And if so, then marriage will likely over the long term come to be seen as a meaningless designation with no claim at all to legal protection.

On the other hand, we can take comfort that, even when we fail to recognize that it belongs to him, God remains faithful to his creation and this certainly includes marriage.



David T. Koyzis is currently writing a book provisionally titled, We Answer to Another: Authority, human personhood and the imago Dei. *His weblog can be found at:* <http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/>.

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Uneditorial

On sermons, serpents, seduction, sex and Sunday conversations

Harry der Nederlanden

The sermon this past Sunday was based on Genesis 3 – the story of the Fall. The preacher made much of the fact that convincing the woman to taste from the forbidden tree took a sophisticated theological argument delivered by the snake. Seducing the man, on the other hand, took only a few words – a simple appeal to his stomach.

That drew quite a laugh from the congregation, much of it soprano and alto rather than bass.

"Sly fellow," I thought to myself. "A politician. He knows where the real power base is in this church."

Now, this wasn't the main point of his sermon, but I forget what the main point was and this is what we talked about afterward over coffee.

My wife seemed quite taken – seduced, you might say – by the preacher's high estimate of female intelligence.

I had reservations.

"Come on," I objected, "if a snake started talking to me, I'd give it a wide berth. I'd certainly have better sense than to take what he says seriously. Anyone with an ounce of awareness knows snakes have a bad reputation. Where do you think the saying, 'He speaks with a forked tongue comes from?'"

That brought her up short. She put down her coffee cup, wiped the boterkoek crumbs from her sweater, and gave my words a moment of deep thought. At least, I assume so, for she closed her eyes, took a deep breath and tipped back her head.

"The Bible says the serpent was the smartest and the most beautiful of all the animals," she replied. "So snakes had a good reputation in those days."

She said it with a triumphant gleam in her eyes.

I was tempted to retort, "That was before they started talking to naked women. After that their reputation went straight to...." But I caught myself. The old wisecracks don't always fare very well since we men

have surrendered our arms in the longest war of all – the war between the sexes.

Her scriptural reply sent me flipping through my Bible looking for Genesis.

Sure enough, Genesis has some laudatory things to say about snakes as well as women. Some things in the Bible are hard to make sense of.

"Humph!" I said, reading the passage for the third time. "What person in his right mind would consider the snake the most beautiful animal in creation? I bet this is written from Eve's point of view."

Recently I've been reading essays by those infamous redaction critics of the Bible. They have a sharp nose for how the text has been altered by editors. A sudden thought struck me: "Maybe the phrase telling us that it was Eve who thought the snake was smart and sexy was lost over time."

"I thought you said those Bible critics were full of hooey."

"Hooey?"

"Hooey!"

When 'hooey' or 'phooey' pop up in the debate, I know things are getting serious.

"Hooey isn't a theological term," I hissed. "I wouldn't use a word like that."

"Phooey!"

Idly I wondered whether the snake's name was Louie.

I felt I was quickly losing the upper hand in the debate, so I tried a different tactic.

"Do you think snakes are smart and beautiful?" I asked slyly. "If one popped up from behind a tree and went, 'Pssst! Hey, listen!" would you go over and listen to what he had to say?"

I had her now. If she said Yes, she was guilty of the same folly as Eve. If she said No, she was admitting that Eve was actually an air-head for listening to a theological argument from a snake of all creatures, no matter how subtle his reasoning.

But my wife watched a lot of those news programs during the last elections, and she has learned there's more than one way to respond to a question.

"Listen to yourself. Do you know what you sound like?"

"Like a male chauvinist?" (Heh-heh, one step ahead.)

"Worse!"

"You mean there's something worse than a male chauvinist?"

"Yes, a male chauvinist theologian."

I wasn't sure what that was supposed to mean, but I had a feeling that she'd just side-stepped my trap and I had fallen in instead. Headfirst.

I needed a new strategy. The Bible was still open in my lap, and I searched for new ammunition.

"Why do you suppose God put the best-looking tree with the best-tasting fruit smack in the middle of Adam and Eve's little garden and then told them, 'Don't touch!'?"

I didn't give her a chance to answer this time. Quickly I went on.

"It was put there just to look at. Each and every day. Every morning when they woke up and walked out the patio door into the garden, there was that luscious tree. It said to them: 'This garden is good – but it isn't the best. There's something better. There's something beyond....'"

"In other words," she interrupted, "the serpent really wasn't the tempter. All he had to do was point to the tree. It was the tree."

"I didn't say that. I said...."

"You said God created the temptation. You said the garden God created for our first parents to live in had at its heart the Tree of Temptation."

"Well, the tree suggested, 'This isn't all; this isn't perfection. There's something more, something better.'"

"Yes, I see it now. Silly I didn't see it before. God put us in the garden to care for it and improve it. And when we actually desired something better, when we began to dream of gardens greener than this one, of fruit sweeter than these – that's when we fell."

"Yes-s-s-s," I whispered. "Precisely. Well said. Swiftly seen – s-s-so s-s-sensible."

"S-s-silly of me not to have seen it s-s-sooner."

"S-s-stick around, sweetheart. I'll make a theologian of you yet. Yes-s-s, your mind is sharp as nails."

"Yes-s-s," she replied. "And you're the hammer."

And so, having discussed the sermon, we serenely sipped our Sunday coffee.

Christian Courier

Founded in 1945

An independent biweekly that seeks to: report on significant events in the Christian community and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective; provide contact for the Christian community.

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The publication of comments, opinions or advertising does not imply agreement or endorsement by *Christian Courier* or the publisher. Please contact circulation if you cannot afford the subscription price but want to receive *Christian Courier*.

Christian Courier
1 Hiscott St, St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7
Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838
Fax: (905) 682-8313; Web site: www.christiancourier.ca
Publications Mail Registration No. 09375
We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

A gift

Ineke Medcalf, our ads and layout person, is recuperating in the hospital. She is minus half her liver. Heather, a member of Ineke's church, has the other half. Heather's liver was failing and it was only a matter of time before it failed completely. Ineke offered to give her half of hers, and after a battery of tests and several postponements the doctors got to work.

The liver has the power to regenerate itself, but it will take Ineke several weeks to get back to speed. Please pray for her and Heather.

Meanwhile, cut us a little slack. We're working hard to produce the paper short-handed until she returns.

Letters

Did Kuyper borrow from Catholicism?

Jake Kuiken makes a very good point in *CC* when he asks whether Kuyper borrowed some of his ideas of sphere sovereignty from the Catholic thinker Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio, SJ. I'm not a historian of this era, but as far as my reading has gone, there is significant similarity between Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty and the Catholic theory of society with its multi-societied body and its principle of subsidiarity.

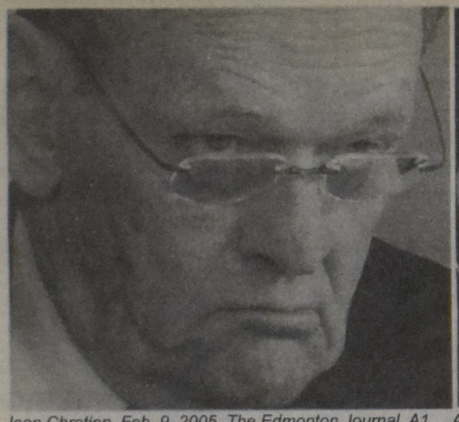
The Catholic view was officially publicized and developed by Pope Leo XIII in the encyclical Rerum Novarum (1891). He promoted it as a critique and alternative to both individualistic liberalism and collectivist socialism. A major debate and discussion was already occuring within Catholic activist and scholarly circles on these questions, a debate that clearly influenced Pope Leo's writing of the encyclical. This approach was further developed by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical Quadragisimo Anno 1931 in response to totalitarian facism and communism. Both are still worthy careful study today!

Kuyper's primary articulation of the principle of sphere sovereignty occurred in his speech, by that name, on the occassion of the opening of the Free University in 1880. Did the Catholic debate influence Kuyper? I'm not sure on the specific question of sphere sovereignty, but listen to Kuyper's own statement in the first footnote to his famous 1891 speech "On the Social Question and the Christian Religion."

"We must admit, to our shame, that the Roman Catholics are far ahead of us in their study of the social problem. Indeed, very far ahead. The action of the Roman Catholics should spur us to show more dynamism. The encyclical Rerum Novarum of Leo XIII states the principles which are common to all Christians, and which we share with our Roman Catholic compatriots."

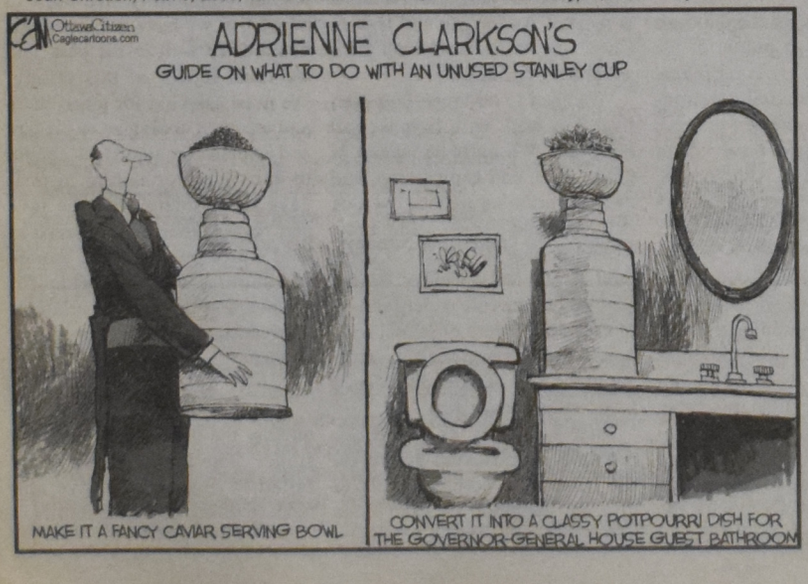
Kuyper read widely and borrowed widely but typically reshaped ideas in harmony with his Calvinist worldview. Whether he read or borrowed from Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio, I don't know. If he was inspired by Catholic thinking in developing the principle of sphere sovereignty, he certainly recast these ideas in a Calvinist framework. Notably, the heirarchy of the Catholic subsidiarity model is gone, as is the implicit grace-nature assumption in which knowledge in lower societies can be achieved by reason. Kuyper also re-orients his understanding of the 'plural structure of society' around the Calvinist understanding of creation ordinances. Even so, Kuyper was ecumenical enough to publicly say, no rather insist, that these principles "are common to all Christians."

John Hiemstra
Edmonton, AB



Jean Chretien, Feb. 9, 2005, The Edmonton Journal, A1

Abraham Kuyper, Cartoon by Albert Hahn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Bush all talk, no deeds

It is with great interest that I always read your paper. In the latest edition dated Feb. 7 also, "Let us now join Bush in praise of freedom."

After quoting some parts of the inaugural speech you asked yourself whether you are a sucker for high-flown rhetoric. To be honest, I wondered about that before you even mentioned it. Rhetoric means to me that it is nice talk but not followed up by deeds. That happens to most politicians.

But I missed also in your article that Bush said that Americans do not look in the rear-view mirror, that Americans are forward looking people! That explains maybe why they do not seem to learn anything from history.

During the war in Vietnam they tried to stop the enemy by spraying the so-called yellow rain so that the jungle died and the enemy was easy to find. Now they have started a similar program in Colombia in order to stop the drug culture there. That all other crops from those poor farmers and even all animals die in the process is not a concern.

If everything works as planned, it will mean that more that one million small farmers will lose their income. If that will take resentment away, I would call president Bush a miracle worker.

It is very puzzling to me that people who experience the foreign policy of the USA and see things happen before their own eyes still have high hopes that anything good will come from this.

My reaction to your article has been very incomplete, but I find it too tiring to even think a lot about it. Hopefully others will do a more thorough job and go into the details.

Hans Katerberg
Gowanstown

In defence of marriage

Permit me to make a few comments and observations on the report that appeared in the Jan. 10 issue concerning "same sex marriage" legislation.

The Supreme Court stated that the days when Canada was largely "a Christian Society of shared social values where marriage and religion were thought to be inseperable, are past." With all due respect for the honorable judges, the evidence contradicts that statement completely. The universal definition of marriage has been in existence since the early beginnings of time, a definition that is held to be true by Christians and non-Christians alike, and still is today. Muslims and Sikhs alike condemn the concept of same sex "marriage."

From day one the Liberal government and Supreme Court have been trying to push the issue into the religious corner. So much for their broad vision.

They fail or refuse to understand that they are doing a disfavor to society as a whole. It means removing the concept of marriage and family, the main pillars of society.

The argument that we live in a multi-cultural society does not hold either. Homosexuality is not culture; it is a perversion and defies moral values. Unless we want to introduce the Sodom and Gomorra culture.

The third point which appears to be the main argument in favor of same sex "marriage" is human rights. I would like to ask my fellow Christians: "Do you find the terminology 'Human Rights' in the Bible? The biblical realty is that we live by grace alone and have forfeited any rights to God's blessings, including marriage, which is a gift from God to humanity for the benefit of a healthy society.

Wilbur Jacobi
Edmonton, AB

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Subscriptions:	Canada (G.S.T. incl.)	U.S.A	Overseas
one yr. (25 issues)	$40.00	$37.00 (US)	one year- $85.00
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(ISSN 1192-3415) Published biweekly on Mondays.
Address all correspondence to: 1 Hiscott St, St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7
Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838, or fax: 905-682-8313
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PRINTED IN CANADA

On location: talking straight about homosexuality

Theresa Miedema

Writing about Christians and homosexuality has been one of the most difficult tasks I have ever attempted. I have begun at least half a dozen articles on the subject only to stop midway, at a loss for the appropriate message. Yet, there is a compelling need for discussion and thought about Christianity and homosexuality. As Canada moves closer to legalizing same-sex marriage, we need to gather our thoughts about what we believe about homosexuality and the relationship between the church and the gay community.

The urgency of addressing the issues surrounding homosexuality and Christian teachings on the matter has increased since the recent Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) decision on same-sex marriage. This decision has brought Canada a step closer to the legalization of same-sex marriage in Canada. In its wake, Prime Minister Paul Martin has aggressively promoted a political agenda of seeking the legalization of same-sex marriage despite the fact that many Canadians have voiced their concerns about the proposed legislation.

We have a window right now to engage Canadian society, including the gay and lesbian community, in a dialogue about our Christian beliefs. We have an opportunity right now to demonstrate our commitment to Biblical teachings – teachings about homosexuality, Christ's love and grace, and our role as Christians in a secular society. Our response to the SCC's decision and the Prime Minister's legislative agenda and our willingness to engage in discussions with the gay and lesbian community over the issue of same-sex marriage will prove this current period in Canadian history as a moment of failure – or as one of the Canadian church's finest hours.

A three-pronged approach

I propose a three-pronged approach to responding to the current issue of same-sex marriage. The three principles of this approach are:

(1) Maintain and do not compromise the Biblical teachings on homosexuality.

(2) Seek a better way to love gays and lesbians and to treat the homosexual community with grace and respect.

(3) Pray for wisdom and actively pursue dialogue with the gay and lesbian community over same-sex marriage and other important issues.

I consider that an approach built upon these three underlying principles will, with God's help, set our feet upon solid ground and help us to challenge the amoral culture that is increasingly gripping our country. Let's examine each of these principles in turn.

Maintaining biblical teachings

It is crucial at the present time to develop a response to the issue of same-sex marriage that is Christ-centred and founded firmly on Biblical teachings. As a matter of first principle, we must not be ashamed of what the Bible says. If the Bible speaks of a prohibition on sexual relationships between same-sex couples (and it does), then we must strive to understand that teaching. We ought not to ignore it, saying simply that Christ's coming has ushered in a new era of grace and acceptance. We ought not to try to modernize Biblical teachings on behalf of God. We ought not to try to make the Bible more socially acceptable for cocktail parties and Canadian society.

We must take God seriously. This implies that we accept that God makes the rules. As Christians in an overwhelming secular society, we are under constant pressure to bend our beliefs to a more socially-acceptable canon. It is one thing to say that we believe that Christ is Lord in church. It is quite another to have the courage to extend the Lordship of Christ into the public arena, where others will judge our political beliefs and social views. Yet now more than ever we must have the courage to do just that: to make it clear to all concerned that we are citizens of another Kingdom and that we answer to an Authority who is above the Canadian Parliament and the Supreme Court.

This is a time of testing of our loyalties. Will we take Scripture seriously, or will we look for an easy analysis that is socially acceptable? What are our motivations in this debate? Are we seeking to serve God or are we trying not to rock the boat?

This is also a tremendous opportunity to witness to a secular society that leaves little room for God. By striving earnestly to understand God's will in these complex matters, we demonstrate clearly that God still matters in Canada. We bear witness to his Kingdom and his authority. Perhaps the seeds of a spiritual renewal lie within the humbling process of prostrating ourselves before God, confessing our sins, and crying out for his direction.

Thus far I have dodged the difficult question of how we should understand the Biblical teachings about homosexuality. For my part, I believe that the prohibition on sexual relations between same-sex couples still exists, just as there is also a continuing prohibition on sex outside of marriage. I consider that God created man and woman for each other and that marriage, and the marriage bed, is intended only for a man and a woman. This is how God created humanity and sexual relations are intended to be strictly reserved for married couples. Other forms of marriage and sexual relationships outside of marriage (homosexual or heterosexual) contravene God's sacred purposes and intentions.

God has adopted marriage as a symbol for the relationship between Christ and the church. I consider that this adds to the sacred nature of the marital relationship, and is another reason why we ought to maintain an understanding of marriage that is consistent with the Biblical model of a relationship between a man and a woman.

So much more could be said about the Biblical teachings about homosexuality. Several articles could be devoted to this one subject. For now, however, this short summary must suffice as I am anxious to move on to the next two elements of my proposed approach.

We must not stop our dialogue with the Canadian public at the point of stating there is a Biblical prohibition on sexual relationships between same-sex couples and that marriage is reserved for a man and a woman. Although the Bible speaks of a prohibition on sexual relations between same-sex couples, the Bible also is a message of grace, hope, forgiveness, and love. The Christian community has excelled at upholding the prohibition part of Biblical teachings when it comes to the gay community, but we have failed miserably at being gracious, loving, and understanding. This is a time to stay true to Biblical teachings. This is a time to be honest about what the Bible says about marriage, sex, and homosexuality – and a time to be honest about our own failure to offer love, grace, and hope and our need of repentance.

A better way to love our brothers and sisters

For a long time, we have relied on the adage, "Love the sinner; hate the sin" to set the course for our relations with the gay community. Sometimes, our unofficial policy seems to have been, "Don't ask; don't tell". Nothing testifies more to our failure to reach out in love to gays and lesbians than the deep division that exists between the gay community and the church.

If you are not convinced that such a division exists, consider how many openly gay and lesbian individuals worship at your church. The total number likely does not exceed three. Many gays and lesbians are not worshiping with us and those who do join us at church are often very quiet about their sexual orientation. I consider that this is because we have not created a safe place for gays and lesbians to worship – a place where they can be treated as fellow sinners, where they can be frank about their own struggles, a place where they will be received with love and compassion.

God's church (and this means the community of believers – the church is the people) must be a place for all sinners. We have all sinned. Can any one of us say that our sins are less egregious than another's? Is there really anyone who can honestly say that he or she has never, ever committed a sexual sin? Remember that even a lingering look is adultery in one's heart! Let God be our judge, for He alone is worthy. As for gay and lesbian Christians, let us walk with them as fellow pilgrims.

We need to do more, however, than just walk with homosexual believers. We must be agents of grace, love, and compassion, and these are gifts that are long overdue in the gay and lesbian community. I reiterate that we must not compromise Biblical teachings. But we should not allow our understanding of the moral nature of sexual relations between same-sex couples to get in the way of extending God's love to this community.

Just as surely as the Bible prohibits homosexual activities, the Bible also commands us to love our neighbor, to serve those around us, to protect the vulnerable, to welcome the outcast. Jesus did not spend his time with the righteous folk of his day. He was more interested in the prostitutes and tax collectors – people who were not socially acceptable. Similarly, we should be careful to avoid tripping over judgement on our way to spending time with our gay and lesbian neighbors.

The gay and lesbian community can appear self-assured, confident, and proud. I am sure that many gays and lesbians are very comfortable with who they are in terms of their sexual orientation. But the homosexual community is still a vulnerable and often hurting community.

There are very few gays and lesbians who have not experienced some form of rejection and hatred because of their sexual orientation at some point in their lives. Many have lost friends or family members. Many have lost jobs, dignity, and respect because of how people have hated them. Sadly, violence prevails against this community. Consider that a young man named Matthew Sheppard was murdered because he was gay. He was not the first victim of violence, and he is not the last victim.

We are guilty of callous indifference to the suffering and hurt that exists in the gay and lesbian community. Yes, this community may be very "gay and proud" and, yes, we may not agree with their life-style choices, but our first responsibility is to love, not to judge. Can you love a sinner without condoning the sin? God does. So can we.

We need to re-commit ourselves to loving and serving the gay and lesbian community. We need to admit that we have not loved this community well in the past, and we must repent of this failing. We must ask God for forgiveness and we must apologize to the gay and lesbian community. We ought to apologize for failing to treat gays and lesbians with the love and respect that they deserve as God's precious children, though we should not apologize for maintaining that sexual relations between same-sex partners is not Biblical.

It may be helpful if I elaborate on why the old adage, "Love the sinner, hate the sin" has likely failed to convey our love and respect to the gay community. I

See **On Location** *on p. 8...*

Relationships/Stewardship

Keep love alive – communicate

Lisa M. Petsche

Courtesy of Valentine's Day, our culture recently devoted special attention to romantic love. As usual, the mass media presented us with Hollywood-type depictions of destined encounters, instantaneous, "perfect" matches, and overwhelming passion.

Unfortunately, such portrayals place too much emphasis on finding the right person and falling in love, and far too little on being a good partner and staying in love. The reality is, successful marriage relationships don't just happen; rather, they require an ongoing investment of time and effort.

Communication plays a critical role, with couple-sharing leading to greater understanding of one another, which in turn increases intimacy.

Messages conveyed may be verbal or non-verbal. The latter include volume and tone of voice, eye movements, facial expressions, posture and body movements; often they speak louder than words.

In every communication, there is a transmitter (sender) and a receiver (listener). A skilled transmitter reflects before speaking; communicates in a timely manner; expresses himself clearly; owns his feelings and thoughts by using "I" statements; shares good news in addition to problems; pays attention to the receiver's reaction; and asks for feedback. His verbal and non-verbal messages complement rather than contradict each other.

Listening to a message, meanwhile, is far from passive – much more than merely hearing words. A good receiver makes himself available; gives full attention; is open-minded and non-judgmental; avoids assumptions; demonstrates interest and empathy; doesn't interrupt or change the subject; asks questions for clarification; summarizes to check if he understood the message correctly; and refrains from offering unsolicited opinions or advice.

The transmitter and receiver are equally responsible for ensuring effective communication. Listening, however, is arguably more difficult than speaking, because

a) it requires patience, since we're able to process information faster than it can be transmitted, and
b) we must relinquish self-focus – not an easy task in this age of egocentrism.

Communication is further enhanced through eliminating distractions; maintaining eye contact; demonstrating respect, sensitivity and acceptance; offering encouragement; being honest; and tuning in to body language (ours and our spouse's). Timing is also important.

Obstacles include trying to be a mind reader or expecting our partner to be one; allowing our attention to wander; monopolizing the conversation; interrupting; sidetracking; blaming; needing to be right; dismissing our partner's feelings or opinions; declaring important subjects off limits; withholding our thoughts and feelings; and prematurely ending a conversation.

Clearly, communication is complicated, with many opportunities for breakdown along the way. Far from natural, it needs to be learned, practiced and continually refined, just like any other skill.

While clichéd conversation and information exchange may sustain casual relationships, marital communication necessitates self-disclosure – that is, sharing our innermost thoughts and feelings. Risking vulnerability and addressing sensitive issues calls for courage, as well as trust in our spouse, but the payoff is big, in terms of the intimacy generated.

Unfortunately – and all too easily – our lives can become so busy that we no longer spend much time communicating on an intimate level. To prevent this from happening, it's imperative that we establish daily sharing time, to ensure we really connect with our spouse. It can be as simple as sitting down together to talk about our day after the kids go to bed, instead of automatically turning on the television or computer or dashing off to do chores.

Communication needn't always be serious, though. It's equally important to express affection and appreciation and to have fun together, including going out on regular dates, similar to when we were courting.

Keeping the lines of communication open will ensure that we grow together, rather than apart.

While we may think we know each other well, both of us are continually, subtly changing in response to new experiences. The only way to stay current and ensure we're there for one another through life's inevitable ups and downs is to make a habit of sharing.

Spending quality time together also keeps us rediscovering the things we enjoy about our spouse that initially drew us to him or her.

Given all we stand to gain, honing those communication skills is well worth the effort.

Lisa M. Petsche is a clinical social worker and a freelance journalist specializing in family life.

The Importance of Wills (2)

Reflections on Stewardship

Rick De Graaf

This is the second of a two part series on Wills written by my colleague, Greta Luimes, the CSS representative for Ontario East and the Maritimes.

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. [Proverbs 15:22]

One of the most frequent questions for estate planners is "Do I need a lawyer to have my Will(s) done?" Good question!

Most stationary stores today offer Estate Planning kits and Will preparation kits and similar helps. Since only 50 percent of us have Wills in place today, there's an attractive market for the providers of these documents. Many of them are sold every day.

What happens when I bring one of these documents home? With all good intentions, I read through the package and note all the blank spaces that need to be completed. Examples are there to help me in my thinking and to ease the decision making required to bring this process to completion. Some of these examples may apply to my personal situation, but some don't. I notice that, although I may have heard about opportunities to benefit charities or ministries at my death, there is no blank space to complete for that purpose.

So, I set the documents aside for now. When I have a bit more time, I pick up my pen and fill in the empty spaces as best I can. But is this template really a testimony to my life as I've lived it before the Lord? Does this document clearly reflect my heart's intentions to look after my family, to assist the ministries I've given so much to during my lifetime? Does it honor my commitment to being a good steward of what God's given me, not only while I live but also at my death? Will this document stand up in a court of law?

God has gifted us all uniquely and according to his purposes. His Word encourages us to use advisors whom he has gifted to assist us in carrying out his purposes. When we are ill, we call a doctor. When we need our vehicle repaired, we drive it to the garage. Is everyone a plumber, a mechanic, an electrician, a lawyer or a financial advisor?

My advice is – call a Christian financial advisor or a representative from Christian Stewardship Services (see our ad on this page) for a meeting to help you in your decision making. You'll learn about the many wonderful opportunities available to you that can benefit your family and the ministries that are special to you. Then find a good lawyer to get your Will done. Why not pick up the phone and set up an appointment today?

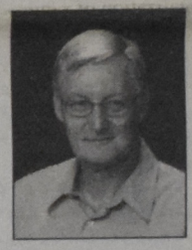
Remember to "Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." [Proverbs 16:3]

Stewardly Tip: Here are some considerations in choosing a lawyer to work with:

- Ask a friend for a referral to a good lawyer.
- Does this lawyer share your faith?
- Is Estate Planning and Will preparation this lawyer's specialty? If not, ask for a referral to someone who is a specialist in this area.

Readers: Share your 'Stewardly Tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestion and your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask for more details.

Next issue: Expanded offerings



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Church

India's Supreme Court to consider rights of Dalit Christians

Satya Kumar

DELHI (Compass) — India's Supreme Court has decided to study the legal implications of denying job and education quotas for Dalit Christians.

"It is a crucial issue and we would examine the legal side ... on the basis of the rulings cited by the petitioner and the Attorney General," an apex court bench comprised of Chief Justice R.C. Lahoti and Justice G.P. Mathur said on February 11.

With the decision, the Supreme Court turned down a government plea to keep the judiciary out of public policy issues. It is expected to review the matter when it reconvenes in four weeks.

Dalits occupy the lowest rung on India's caste ladder. As such they are often denied access to certain types of employment and institutes of higher learning.

India's quota system reserves a certain number of employment and educational placements for members of lower castes. Initially, Dalits converting to Hinduism, Sikhism or Buddhism were excluded from the reservation provision. After lobbying in recent years, the government amended the law so that followers of these religions were covered by the quota system. However, Dalit Christian and Muslim converts are still excluded.

About 26 percent of government jobs in India are reserved for the Dalits and other so-called "backward castes" with the aim of bringing them to the political and social mainstream.

However, while lobbying by Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist groups resulted in a favorable amendment to the existing law, a virulent campaign by Hindu nationalists has stalled such a concession for Dalit Christians.

Senior advocate Prashant Bhushan is spearheading the issue in the Supreme Court on the basis of a petition filed by the Center for Public Interest Litigation.

"We are saying that this provision is unconstitutional," Bhushan told Compass. "It discriminates against a person on the basis of his or her religion. Fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution say that there can be no discrimination on the basis of one's religion."

In court, India's Attorney General Milon Banerjee said he had already asked the government to look at the matter "sympathetically," India's national daily The Hindu reported.

"It is a matter of policy and legislation and the courts should keep out of it," he said, to which the Supreme Court bench replied, "It is a very important issue."

Banerjee also revealed that the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had rejected a proposal to include Dalit Christians in the quota system in 2002, during their term of government.

"We were surprised that the Attorney General quoted in court the BJP government's reluctance to come to the aid of Dalit Christians," said John Dayal, president of the All India Catholic Union, in a press release issued on February 12.

"But nothing more was expected from the communal BJP regime."

Dayal also applauded the Supreme Court's intervention.

"It is a joyous day," he wrote. "We hope that the Supreme Court will soon end the historic injustice that was done in 1950 to Dalits professing the Christian faith."

Christians account for less than two percent of India's billion-plus population.

Over the years, various memorandums have been presented to successive prime ministers and at many rallies held throughout the country in support of the long-pending demand of the Dalit Christians.

...**On location** *continued from p. 6*

consider that the sexual orientation of many gays and lesbians places a central role in shaping their identity and their lives. Their sexual orientation influences their social circles, where they play sports, sometimes even where they live. It may become part of how gays and lesbians dress – how they choose to express themselves in public.

In many respects, the sexual orientation of gays and lesbians is far more central to their lives and how they view themselves than the sexual orientation of straight people. There is no straight pride parade. There is no straight village. There are no straight baseball leagues. Straight people do not express themselves very often through their sexual orientation. But gays and lesbians do – often so much so that their very personhood becomes closely linked to their sexual orientation. For many gays and lesbians, I suspect that the love the sinner/ hate the sin dichotomy is a false one. For these individuals, saying, "Love the sinner, hate the sin" really amounts to saying, "Hate the sinner because the sinner is defined by the sin".

It is not surprising that we have not done a good job loving our gay and lesbian neighbors given that we have relied heavily on an approach that does not convey love from the perspective of homosexual persons. We may not have fully appreciated that saying, "Love the sinner, hate the sin" is not at all a message of love. But now we know. At the present time, we cannot deny that our attempts to love and respect the gay community have failed. It is time to admit this failure and to move onto adopting a better way of loving this community.

This is also an opportunity. Gays and lesbians have been met by the world in general with everything from indifference to hostility to revulsion. Let us witness to unbelievers by being a community that treats gays and lesbians with grace. Let us extend the hand of fellowship to Christian gays and lesbians and welcome them as fellow sinners. Above all, let us love gays and lesbians as Christ has loved us. If the Christian community cannot be counted on to love people in this world, then to whom can people turn?

Prayer and dialogue

The great challenge that remains is to strike the balance between conveying love and grace to the homosexual community without compromising the integrity of Scriptural teachings about marriage and homosexual relations. I do not have the answer to how this balance should be struck. I cannot even offer up a suggestion.

But I can propose a method for how we move forward: prayer and dialogue. We begin by praying about how to strike this balance. We confess that we find it hard to understand how to uphold Biblical teachings in the case of homosexuality whilst still reaching out in love and grace to gays and lesbians. We ask God for guidance.

God must understand our struggle well, since God loved us while we were still sinners, before Christ died for us, in the face of God's own overwhelming holiness. If we ask, he will answer. Let us commit to uniting in prayer about this matter. What an impact we may have if Canadian churches from coast to coast, from north to south, pray honestly and openly with God about this matter! What an impact we may have if we suspend our own pride and our own insecurities long enough to ask God to help us to love the gay community! What would happen if we asked God to help us to be a witness to his love and grace by actively and openly loving gays and lesbians? Let's find out.

Our next step is to seek dialogue with the homosexual community. This dialogue should begin by admitting that we have not loved this community well in the past. As discussed above, we need to apologize. This will be difficult. But it will also serve to demonstrate that we are serious about our desire to follow Christ in this world and to love as freely and as radically as Jesus did and still does. It also may help to build trust – something that has been sorely lacking in the relationship between the church and the gay community.

We ought to be honest with gays and lesbians about the challenge we face in balancing our desire to love them with our commitment to Biblical teachings. Perhaps if there is greater understanding about why we say the things we do and why we insist on certain points, there will be an increased ability to communicate with each other.

One question we ought to ask the gay community is, "How can we love you more effectively? What can we do to serve you?" Although we cannot compromise on Biblical teachings and therefore cannot engage in activities that would condone the active pursuit of a gay lifestyle, there is likely some role that we could fill. Whatever the case may be, we should at minimum prove willing to ask.

We should also seek dialogue about the difficult issues facing society. As our churches wrestle with the issues surrounding gay marriage, for example, we ought to bring in representatives from the gay and lesbian community. They may be able to bring some perspective to our discussions that are missing. It will also help us to develop responses to these issues that are more loving and compassionate than the responses we would develop in isolation. By receiving feedback on how we articulate the delicate balance between upholding biblical integrity and demonstrating love and grace, we will be able to formulate a more sensitive response – one that truly does sound love and grace in the ears of those who hear it.

We must remember that we bear the responsibility of representing Christ to the gay and lesbian community, as well as to the rest of secular Canada. We should focus our witness on integrity, love, and grace, and not merely on judgement.

I consider that Canada is teetering on the brink of a moral crisis. We need spiritual renewal in this land. The issue of same-sex marriage offers a unique opportunity to stoke the fires of renewal. And so, my friends, I urge you above all to pray for the spiritual renewal of our country. Pray that the Holy Spirit will fill this land and turn people's hearts back to Christ. Pray that we may be able to emulate Christ to our neighbors, both straight and gay. Let us offer ourselves up as conduits of God's love and mercy. Now, more than ever, we need to demonstrate a strong witness to society – a witness that proclaims the relevance of God in the modern world, that upholds the integrity of scripture, and that boldly offers love and grace to a hurting world

Theresa Miedema is a member of Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto. She practices law in Toronto, and is also currently completing a doctoral degree in law and international development. Theresa has represented gay and lesbian clients in various legal matters. Theresa has also worked with people who are homosexual. She has even played hockey with lesbians. Since overcoming her insecurities about hanging around with gays and lesbians, Theresa has found that she has gained insight (and some good laughs) from spending time with her homosexual colleagues.

Church

Indian Christians plan demonstration after anti-church violence

Anto Akkara

New Delhi (ENI) – Christian groups in India plan to march on the country's parliament on Thursday in protest against the killing of two pastors and half a dozen attacks on church targets in recent weeks.

"It looks like we are facing a new cycle of violence," said Church of North India Bishop D. K Sahu, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), which groups 29 Orthodox and Protestant Churches.

On February 7, 25-year-old Pastor Narayan, a Hindu convert belonging to an evangelical Christian group in the southern Indian state of Karnataka, was murdered.

The Global Council of Indian Christians, which is based in Karnataka, described the killing as the culmination of a spate of anti-Christian violence in the state following a controversial visit by US television evangelist Benny Hinn in late January.

The visit led to protests by some Hindu groups who said it aimed to convert Hindus to Christianity.

Pastor Narayan's murder was followed by the six trainee pastors of the Believers Church, a Pentecostal church in India, being assaulted in the neighboring Kerala state on February 13 when they were on a visit to a village.

Within three days, another pastor, Gilbert Raj, who runs a children's home in eastern Orissa state was murdered.

Police said the killing was the result of rivalry between Christians but Sajan K George of the Global Council of Indian Christians alleged the coalition government of Orissa, led by the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party, was trying to shield the real culprits.

Subsequently, 280 young Christians who reached the city of Kota in the western state of Rajasthan February 19 to attend a Bible meeting, organized by the evangelical Emmanuel Church, were attacked and then sent back to their home state of Andhra Pradesh in south India with a police escort.

M A Thomas, the head of the 400,000-strong Emmanuel Church, said that more than 300 Hindu activists armed with iron rods and cycle chains were waiting at the railway station when the Bible students reached Kota.

"They beat up our youth, and locked them up in a temple while police remained spectators," Thomas told Ecumenical News International. "Later, the police took the victims into custody and did not even allow us to meet them."

Widow of murdered missionary honored by Indian government

Anto Akkara

New Delhi (ENI) – The widow of an Australian missionary, Graham Staines, who was murdered in India in 1999 has said she is overwhelmed to have been honored by the Indian government with a top award for civilians.

"This is an honor not for me but for Graham and all the staff at the leprosy home" where the Baptist missionary worked, said Gladys Staines on Wednesday after hearing she was among 27 eminent people named for the Padmashree annual civilian awards.

Graham Staines and his two sons Philip, aged 10, and eight-year-old Timothy were burned to death in January 1999 as they slept in a van in Manoharpur, a remote village in the Indian state of Orissa.

Gladys Staines came to India in 1981 as a nurse and married Graham in 1984.

The award is "indeed an encouragement for those who work for the uplift of the needy and the downtrodden," she said in a telephone interview from Brisbane in Australia where she was arranging her daughter's admission into university.

She said the award was also an honor for the leprosy home in Baripada in Orissa where Graham Staines had been working since coming to India in 1965.

Dara Singh, said to be a Hindu fundamentalist who had accused Staines of converting tribal people, is in prison pending an appeal against a death sentence for the killing of the Australian missionary.

The announcement of the award led to protests from some extremists who have burned an effigy of Gladys Staines and hailed Singh as a "Hindu hero."

Dutch politician urges religious holidays for workers of all faiths

Andreas Havinga

Amsterdam (ENI) – A Dutch government minister has said all workers should have the right to take two days paid holiday a year for religious festivals, in addition to existing national public holidays, which include Christian celebrations such as Christmas.

"Integration is a two-way street," noted Karien van Gennip, a government minister for economic affairs. "That means understanding and respect for one another, and that also means that anyone can honor his or her faith."

Van Gennip, a member of the governing Christian Democratic (CDA) party said all labor agreements between employers and workers should include a guarantee to this effect.

The minister said workers should tell their employers at the beginning of the year which two days they wanted to take off for religious holidays, for example, to celebrate Eid ul Adha, the Islamic feast of sacrifice, or Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of light.

Current practice in the Netherlands was "too non-committal," Van Gennip said. Non-Christian employees can ask to take time off work for their religious feast days, but employers have the right to refuse such requests.

She noted recognizing non-Christian religious holidays could help immigrants integrate into Dutch society.

Still, the minister rejected a suggestion made six years ago by Roman Catholic Bishop Martinus Muskens to replace Whit-Monday as a national public holiday by a day to mark the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

This would not be in keeping with "our predominant Christian culture," she said.

The federation of Christian trade unions (CNV) has welcomed the minister's proposal, *Nederlands Dagblad* reported. But the small Political Reformed Party (SGP) described the idea as a misplaced form of integration.

Almost one million of the Netherlands' 16 million people are Muslim.

Eritrea jails another 31 Christians

LOS ANGELES (Compass) — Another 31 Eritrean Christians have been jailed by police in towns north of the capital Asmara over the past 10 days. The latest police sweeps brings the total to 187 arrests for "illegal" Christian activities in Eritrea since the beginning of January.

Fourteen members of the Kale Hiwot Church in Adi-Tekelzan, 20 miles north of Asmara, were apprehended February 4 during a Bible study at the home of their pastor, identified only as Brother Isak. All 14 were arrested by local police and at last report remained under detention at the town's police station.

The previous day, Professor Senere Zaid of the agriculture faculty at Eritrea University was put under arrest in Asmara's Police Station No. 4. Local police officials had mounted a two-week search for Zaid, after finding his name on the rental contract of a facility used for worship by the Kidane Mehrete revival group.

Zaid was one of the revival leaders who eventually left the Kidane Mehrete Orthodox Church seven years ago over doctrinal differences. He and his congregation are now part of the Living God Church.

After a foiled police raid on one of their meeting places, Zaid hid to avoid being arrested. The professor had not been present at the targeted gathering, which had broken up before the police arrived. But authorities soon discovered that the facility was rented in Zaid's name.

When Zaid decided to turn himself in to police commanders on February 3, he was promptly jailed at an Asmara police station. Zaid is married with two young children.

Last Saturday, 15 Christian women, gathered in a private home for prayer, were put under arrest and jailed at the police station in Keren, Eritrea's third-largest town 40 miles northwest of Asmara.

"All the sisters exposed to imprisonment and insult by the authorities in Keren were gathered merely for the purpose of prayer, not any political purpose," one of their colleagues confirmed.

No charges have been filed against them since their February 12 arrest, although relatives who inquired about them at the Keren police station were told the women were "engaged in activities that the government did not approve." Local authorities are reportedly seeking informers to divulge details of any known meetings of evangelical believers, who are being described as "a threat to national security."

Three well-known Protestant pastors have been held under arrest since May 2004 by the Eritrean government, which refuses to confirm their location or allow anyone to visit them. Several hundred more evangelical Protestant believers, many of them soldiers caught worshiping during their active military service, also remain imprisoned for refusing to recant their faith.

The Eritrean government closed down the country's independent Protestant churches in May 2002, declaring their places of worship illegal and forbidding home gatherings. The banned groups include indigenous Pentecostal and charismatic congregations, as well as Adventist, Presbyterian, Assemblies of God and Methodist-linked churches. Baha'i and Jehovah's Witness adherents are also targeted severely.

Individuals and groups caught praying, studying the Bible or worshiping outside the umbrella of the country's four recognized "official" religions (Orthodox Christian, Catholic, Lutheran or Islam) continue to be jailed and tortured, often incarcerated in metal shipping containers or underground cells.

In January Eritrean authorities without explanation extended their crackdown to Roman Catholics, jailing 25 members of the Catholic Church during a wedding rehearsal in Asmara. Police entered the building and took the entire wedding party to jail. The arrest marked the first reported crackdown against Eritrea's Catholic community, which enjoys "official" recognition by the government. The same Sunday morning, security police swooped down on a wedding ceremony in Barentu and arrested the 67 evangelical Christians present. Meanwhile, Compass has confirmed that 25 of the 60 Rema Charismatic Church members arrested at a New Year's Eve celebration in Asmara were released after signing a pledge not to participate in such meetings again.

Despite detailed inquiries filed over the past two years by the U.S. State Department, Amnesty International and several European governments, Eritrea categorically denies that any violations of religious freedom are taking place within the country.

60th Anniversary

New names, challenges, fieldmen and agents

Harry der Nederlanden

Some post-war immigrants – even a minister – weren't sure about the name of the new North American church they had become part of: was it the Christian **Reform** Church or the Christian Reform**ed** Church or the Christian Reformed Churches? Apparently churches didn't have signs erected on the lawn in those days. Of course, many CRC congregations lacked not only a sign but also a building or a minister in the years immediately after the War.

John Roorda, writing in *CC* March 15, 1946, sets the record straight. That little suffix **-ed** is important, he says, especially in Canada. We don't want our churches associated with those infamous "reform schools." In those days, juvenile delinquents who were out of control were sent to reform school to be straightened out by military discipline.

Roorda was right – it was important to prevent confusion in the public mind of our churches with reform schools. No one went to reform school voluntarily. In grade school (public), my friends often warned each other (and me too – once), "Watch out or they'll send you to reform school!" So when I was in the sixth grade and my friends heard that next year I would no longer be with them but was being sent to reform school, they were all deeply sympathetic.

"What did you do?" they asked.

Others got right to the heart of the matter: "How did they catch you?" They wanted to know how to avoid the same fate.

When I informed them that I was already going to a reform church, their sympathy became even deeper. But they began to understand. A guy that needed to go to reform church surely needed to go to reform school as well.

In succeeding issues of *CC*, other recent immigrants asked why it wasn't in the plural – Reformed Churches rather than Reformed Church. In the old country, they had belonged to the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the plural signifying that each and every congregation was self-governed. Even then they'd been hurt, some felt, by a synod that took on too much power, so they were very sensitive to being "ruled" by some entity from south of the border.

Sometimes people ask rhetorically, "What's in a name?" Quite a lot, said the new immigrants; they weren't going to be caught napping. Next thing you know we'd have a hierarchy like the Roman Catholics – and they were only a step away from servitude.

The De Peuter home

Fighting communism, movies and sports

Lest we think McCarthyism – ferreting out communist sympathizers – was limited to the U.S., the same issue of *CC* takes an excerpt from the *Edmonton Journal*. It quotes the provincial secretary of Alberta sounding an alert to the churches and "all fair-minded people in the province" warning them that the communists are conspiring "to undermine the moral and ethical standards of children." How? Through films – "perverted sex films, horror films, films glorifying gangsterism and force"– and also through "the glorification of cinema stars, whose publicized private lives are contrary to Christian ideals."

Nowadays our kids are taught in media studies that from the beginning Hollywood was busy celebrating American virtues like individualism, self-reliance and resistance to authority of all kinds.

But for those who had seen the rapid rise of fascism in Germany and the advance of communism to the very borders of Europe, the threat of communism was nothing to smirk at. Hadn't National Socialism sprouted, as it were, in their own back yard?

The Reformed immigrants were anxious about their children in this new country, lest they become contaminated by who knows what. That was one reason an entire group had settled out in the wilds north of Edmonton to create Neerlandia. In the Nov. 15, 1946 issue of *CC*, Cecil W. Tuininga of Neerlandia warns that not just movies but sports too may corrupt our youth. He speaks of the powerful grip sports can have on us "so as to fill all our thoughts." Apparently some every-sphere Calvinists were suggesting that Reformed folk provide recreational facilities to keep their youth close to home and church. But Tuininga sees dangers in encouraging sports: "We tread on dangerous ground, for the love of pleasures destroys the love and the sense of God."

I don't know whether Tuininga was thinking of hockey, but I suspect so. And I'm afraid that his warnings went unheeded – especially in his home territory of Neerlandia. To our sorrow, I might add.

A decade or so later, Neerlandia had not one hockey team but two. And when we headed north from Beverly and Edmonton, Tuininga's warning that we were treading on dangerous ground rang in our ears, In fact, our ears (and much else) were ringing long after the game was over. Those Neerlandia hockey teams knocked the stuffings out of us – and it was true that they derived far too much pleasure from it.

But it confirmed in our minds the Kuyperian slogan, "In our isolation is our strength!" Isolated up north, those Neerlandia hockey teams were much stronger than ours.

Port Arthur and New York

J. S. Ypma wrote in the *Contact* of Nov. 14, 1949 to tell something of the community of Dutch immigrants around Port Arthur and Fort William in Ontario. He says that when he arrived in the area a year and a half earlier, his was the only Reformed family for hundreds of miles. He considered moving to Winnipeg, but he liked his sponsor and at the urging of Ontario's Immigration Commission stayed to form the nucleus for what was in 1949 a community of 39 people. He says that they are meeting every 14 days at his home for worship. A couple of ministers from Classis Minnesota had led worship and classis promised to send someone north once a month.

To encourage others to come, he describes the area for prospective farmers. The soil is good in lower-lying ground, he says. Farmers plant all sorts of crops: grain, potatoes, turnips and other vegetables. But milking is the big thing, although the market for milk is limited, but cream always brings a good price. The market for eggs and chickens is unlimited (and this is long before McDonald's).

Farms can be gotten cheap because there are lots of farmers sitting on farms that they are no longer working. People are moving into the cities. Farms are connected by good roads and they all have electricity.

Ypma adds that if the plans for building the canal (the St. Lawrence seaway) are implemented, "Port Arthur will become if not the largest then the second largest harbor city in the world second only to New York."

Eager to attract more of their own, it seems that everybody became a salesman, singing the praises of their piece of Canada. Ypma seems to have had visions of the Volendam and Waterman steaming all the way across the Atlantic up the St. Lawrence across the Great Lakes right to Port Arthur. [As someone who landed two years later, I'm glad it didn't happen. I wouldn't have missed the train ride across the Canadian Shield for anything. And I was eager to get off the Volendam – even though the train rocked every bit as much as the boat.]

The Holland Marsh disaster

Almost all of the early post-war immigrants experienced hardship

of one kind or other. But none more than those who settled in Holland Marsh. The *CC* of Oct 2, 1954 describes the floods caused in Toronto and Holland Marsh by Hurricane Hazel. *CC* reports a death toll of 80. The six inches of rain that fell in a few hours flooded river banks and broke the dikes around Holland Marsh, sweeping houses off their foundations and washing them downstream. Some ended up over a mile away.

One of those houses carried away by the flood housed 13 members of the De Peuter family, including 5 children. This was the third time the family was caught in a flood – the first two times in The Netherlands. In 1944 they were flooded out when the famous "dam-busters" flooded parts of Holland to impede the movement of Nazi troops, and then again in 1953 when high tides and storms combined to destroy the Dutch bulwarks holding back the sea waters.

Fortunately for the family, the house stayed afloat and intact until it lodged against the raised highway and they were all able to scramble to safety.

Dikes in this country, it turned out, were every bit as uncertain as in the old country.

I was only nine years old at the time, but I recall the story vividly. It taught me the meaning of irony. At night I lay in bed thinking of that Dutch family, so like ours. They had traveled thousands of miles and settled in the heart of Canada hundreds of miles from the sea. Surely they had thought themselves safe from any more floods. And then one morning they had felt the house tremble and then begin to move, and looking out the window they saw that their house had turned into an ark, but a leaky, fragile ark that God had not sealed.

What had gone through their minds. Did they think, "God sure has a weird sense of humor"?

Only a year earlier my father had gone out drumming up donations for the flood in Holland, now the church was taking collections for Holland Marsh. This at a time when we immigrants were still receiving care packages from the U.S.

The floods hit just as the crops were being harvested. It was bad news, but the Dutch were thankful that at least here the water was not salty sea water, so they could plant again next year.

CC reports that early news stories had told of dozens being killed in the Holland Marsh area, so there were some anxious hours for relatives. No one in Holland Marsh lost his life. The flooding in Toronto, however, claimed 4 members of a Dutch immigrant family, one of whom had arrived in Canada only a few weeks earlier.

A later issue of *CC* reports that about 20 men from Holland Marsh were helped to find work in the Toronto area while the flooded marsh was being pumped out. They were such good workers that one employer said, "Bring me more of these men."

The government of The Netherlands donated $50,000 to help in the recovery effort – a symbolic gesture in return for what the country owed Canada for liberating it. Most of the article, however, is devoted to asking why England didn't offer any help. (It did – later.)

Holland Life in Amsterdam, a large insurance company, sent 500 edam cheeses to the stricken area to be divided among the families, whether for flotation devices or to plug the holes in the dike the story didn't say.

The CRC fieldmen

In the Fall of 1954 *CC* carried discussions of the latest CRC Synod. It debated the position of the so-called "fieldmen" appointed in different parts of Canada to help the wave of Dutch immigrants get settled, find work and become organized as communities. Since by this time there were already thriving churches in most of these areas, some believed the work of the fieldmen was no longer necessary. Members of the existing churches, already well on the way to becoming knowledgeable Canadians, were capable of helping the latest immigrants to learn the ropes in the new country. Rev. Guillaume came to the defence of the fieldmen. He didn't like the way those folks south of the border talked about our hard-working fieldmen and insisted they deserved greater honor.

The work of the fieldmen, Synod decided, was coming to an end, but it decided to appoint them for another year. Gradually, however, their work should be handed over to the local churches. One of the delegates at Synod assured Guillaume that the representatives did indeed know what they were talking about, all of the speakers having worked in Canada, and that Synod deeply appreciated what these men had done for the CRC.

The CPR agents

The Nov. 5, 1954 issue of CC *describes the sort of work done by Colonization Agents of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. John Krijgsman, himself Dutch, was assigned to work with Dutch immigrants. This is an excerpt from a longer article.*

Before the arrival of the ship in Quebec or Montreal, tags must be prepared indicating the name of the immigrant, the name and address of the sponsor and the final destination on the railway. When the arrival time of the ship in Quebec is known, John, with a colleague and officials of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, travel to Rimouski, which is some 300 miles north-east of Montreal, situated on the lovely banks of the St. Lawrence River. From Rimouski they travel by taxi another 4 miles to Father Point, a tiny village which is very important from the St. Lawrence navigation point of view, for here the pilots either board the incoming ocean vessels to see them safely through to Quebec or Montreal or leave the outgoing ones.

When they arrive, the immigrant ship can be seen in the far, far distance, still 4 or 5 hours away. John and the other officials then board the pilot-tug and are taken to the ship waiting for them in midstream.

It is always an impressive sight to see the immigrants lining the ship's railing, very excited after their long and perhaps somewhat monotonous sea-journey to have some diversion. The moment John and his colleague are aboard, they start issuing the tags and tell immigrants what proceedings are ahead of them.

The formalities

When they arrive in the port of Quebec or Montreal, it is only a matter of unloading luggage and other belongings and then the great moment has come when the immigrants can set foot on Canadian soil. After the usual Immigration and Custom formalities the immigrants are ready to proceed inland.

In Quebec the train is waiting along the dockside while in Montreal special buses are waiting to take the passengers to the Canadian Pacific's Windsor Station.

It is amazing how co-operative people are. This makes the job of John Krijgsman and his co-workers much easier than it would appear when it is taken into account that usually between 500 and 700 people have to be directed at one time. The immigrants always appear very happy when the train starts moving. They know that they are on the last leg of their long journey and somehow they seem to be more relaxed.

Into the west

When time permits, between the arrivals of Dutch immigrant ships, John often accompanies the immigrants to Western Canada; otherwise one of his colleagues travels on the train. As soon as the train starts moving he begins to check to see whether everybody is in the right car. Sometimes immigrants have to leave the train in the middle of the night, and then it is good to know in which car they can be found.

Telegrams are also prepared on board the train and dispatched enroute in order to notify friends or sponsors at point of destination. These special trains are always equipped with lunch-counter cars and immigrants can buy a variety of food for reasonable prices.

Not all immigrants from Holland, however, arrive by boat. Quite a number travel by K.L.M. charter planes. They also are assisted by the Canadian Pacific's Immigration & Colonization Department. The procedure for these immigrants is, of course, the same but the number is much smaller and therefore does not require the same amount of work....

The writer urges CC *readers to forward the articles to relatives and prospective immigrants in the Netherlands and to inform them that the CPR is interviewing those interested in farming at various locations in Europe. He also sings the praises of the CPR, claiming that its experienced agents are sources of reliable information on farming opportunities in Canada. (An article in an earlier issue of* CC, *however, warned readers that they were better off listening to other immigrants who had already settled in the area they were considering. As I said, everybody was a salesman.)*

The Company

Immigrants interviewed and selected ... may be brought to Canada either for employment in agriculture as farm labor or for settlement on land purchased by them....

The increase of population in Canada through immigration and colonization will remain a fundamental interest of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for a long time to come. Given peace in the world, there should be no doubt whatever that opportunities for Canadian economic expansion are now greater than ever before.

It may fairly be said that the Company's colonization organization, with its subsidiary branches and affiliated organizations, has been the most complete organization ever developed for the recruitment, movement and settlement of colonists to a new country.... It has consistently maintained the policy of settling colonists, whether on the Company's own land or on farms which are privately owned, to the best advantage of the settlers.

Nature metaphors

Water

Ron de Boer

I suspect you, like me, have been spending a lot of time the last couple of months thinking about water. Indian Ocean water to be precise. I can't remember ever before having uttered the word tsunami, but that word – with its torrent of images of tourist resorts and whole villages being swept away – will forever be a part of my vocabulary.

For the impoverished fishermen living in makeshift houses along the shores of southeast Asian countries, water is life-sustaining, a place from which can be pulled up tomorrow's supper or next week's haul to the market. For the rich along its edges, water is the desirable destination whose sounds and sights inspire artists and vacationers alike.

When contained, water is a wonderfully created element, running smoothly from our taps, glimmering in our swimming pools, and gurgling over mossy stones in our rock gardens. But like sin itself, when water betrays God-made and human-constructed barriers, when it leaks through our pipes or crosses over our sandy beaches, it is the devil itself. Last December's tsunami is a sober reminder to us that water, while as common and necessary to all of humanity as the air we breath, also has an evil, destructive side. We enjoy it and live by it, but we also succumb to it in very unpleasant ways.

From the beginning of creation, water has figured prominently not only as a tangible thing but also as a symbol of hope. The word water appears 693 times in the Bible and emerges only 35 words into the opening verses of Genesis: "...and the spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Gen.1: 3) In the Old Testament, water figures literally in stories of destructive floods and parting seas that drown its victims. By contrast, in the New Testament water is life-giving, a symbol of hope and eternal life. Jesus is described as the "living water."

As we shall see, this dichotomous nature of water as destroyer and life-giver is as prominent a Biblical symbol as any to explain the saving power of Jesus Christ in a world steeped in sin and mystery.

But first let's look at the significant role water plays in our lives. We drink water daily, we use it to wash ourselves (hopefully daily as well!) and we employ its services for recreational purposes. We swim in it, float on it, and skim along the top of it wearing skis on our feet or an inner tube on our backsides. If we have access to the proper equipment, we can dive deeply into it and see beyond its surface. We skip rocks across the top of it, plunge cannon-ball style off diving boards into it and fill our Super Soaker water guns with water to intimidate little kids. We even freeze water to cool our drinks and to skate on.

It's safe to say we take water for granted. We use water on the things we cherish. We wash our cars, we water our lawns and plants, we build elaborate rock ponds and fountains on our properties for the birds to play in and for us to admire through our back windows.

After the Deluge, Circa 1588 Cornelisz. Van Haarlem

Water inspires art. Admit it, we love to look at water. Why else do so many tourists flock from around the world to peer through the viewfinders at Niagara Falls? We take pictures of sunsets over lakes and hang up calendars and inspirational posters with pictures of rivers, brooks and seas. Some of our best-known hymns are sprinkled with water imagery: "When Peace Like A River" and "I've Got Peace Like a River For My Soul" and "Baptized in Water, Sealed by the Spirit" to name but a few.

And of course we drink water. In fact, we drink more water now than ever before. We're even willing to buy water and carry it around in labeled bottles with names like Evian and Silver Springs because we have lost our confidence in tap water.

Humanity's response to water is all around us. Eaves troughs line our homes; drains appear every hundred feet or so on our streets; ditches and culverts can be found along roads; umbrellas, raincoats, and rubber boots sell briskly at our local Zeller's stores. Just try to drive around the city for one hour without spotting a plumber's van. Plumbers earn their paycheques containing and re-routing water so we can flush our toilets without a single worry as to where the water is going.

But water has a dark side, too. Any plumber or sailor will tell you water is always to be respected and never fully trusted. Kids drown every year in swimming pools; boats sink and fishermen fall through lake ice; whole towns can fall victim to contaminated water.

As we witnessed in countries bordering the Indian Ocean, water can rear its ugly head in ways unimaginable. It throws waves at resorts; it pulls people under and engulfs entire households. It has the power to rip buildings from its foundations and carry busses away in torrents.

Water is so crucial in our lives that if there is too much or too little of it, we die.

It's no wonder water plays such a central role in the Christian story. God created water then separated it from land. He filled it with fish and plants and all kinds of creatures, some of which have yet to be discovered by marine biologists. This land and water were perfect until Adam and Eve sinned and the dark side of water was realized.

The first epic story of water is when God taught the world a lesson with the Flood. He sent rains. He swelled rivers. He overflowed the banks of every ocean created.

Try to imagine a worldwide tsunami. I can't. I can scarcely get my head wrapped around images of towns being swept away by three waves vomited up by the floor of the Indian Ocean. Imagine the cries rising from earth in Noah's days when the land was being invaded by water? Imagine the CNN footage: people scampering to higher ground, little children being helped into trees by their mothers and fathers, whole families taking to the hills and then to the mountains as the waters rise higher and higher.

Many must have jumped into their own boats, but of course were ill-prepared for the months and months of drifting once the rains had stopped. Imagine the news photographs of their skeletons lying in the bottoms of the boats. How many of those people who laughed at Noah's absurd plan to build a giant ark tried to claw at the sides of the ark hoping to save themselves?

Then God sent a rainbow signifying he would never again destroy the world with a flood. He had a new plan for the world. A new beginning. Our trust in God's purpose in the Flood is fundamental to our Christian belief system.

So where is the rainbow in Southeast Asia? Has the rainbow God promised as a sign never to destroy the earth again faded? While the dark side of water took away so many tens of thousands of lives, can the goodness of God possibly emerge?

The answer, of course, is yes. While God does not cause sin and tragedy in the world, he takes disasters such as the tsunami and creates goodness. Never in the history of mankind have citizens on this planet prayed and given of their personal resources the way people did for the victims of Southeast Asia. The plight of that impoverished corner of the globe was brought to the cameras of international journalists by this disaster.

While the tragedy of lost lives can never be soothed with a cheque or money order, the relief and fundraising efforts came with the unexpected magnitude of a tsunami. Response came from all levels of government, corporations and individuals after the disaster, demonstrating that the world can truly shift its resources from the rich side of the globe to the poor in a very short period of time. Rich countries are considering forgiving the debt of countries such as Thailand and Malaysia. That's a tidal wave of justice long overdue in our world. Some say this flood of giving will usher in a new era of philanthropy.

I can't help but think about how Biblical this all seems. In the Old Testament, water is a literal concept often emerging in negative contexts. God used water to flood the earth; Moses turned rivers to blood; from the water came the plague of frogs; God parted the Red Sea for Moses to escape and then drowned the pursuing Egyptians. After the Israelites escaped through the Red Sea, they wandered in the wilderness for three days and could find no water. In fact, one of the main reasons the Israelites complained over and over again to Moses was due to water shortage.

All through the Old Testament you'll find references to rivers, seas and wells being dried up, of people thirsting. This Old Testament set-up for the New Testament's references to water parallels the hope of and just response to the Southeast Asian tsunami. After reading about floods, rains and drownings, after reading story after story of dried-up rivers and wells and Israelites thirsting for a drink of water, we get to the New Testament and the story of Jesus Christ, "the living water." In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist says, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

When Jesus came, he was in full power over the waters. He walked on water, calmed the raging seas with a single command, turned water into wine without so much as a word, and demonstrated servanthood by using water to wash his disciples' feet. When he walked the earth doing miracles

Interview

You were a stranger and I...

Sony Vanderveen-Feddema

Rose Dekker has discovered that being Refugee Coordinator for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) involves stepping mid-stream into people's lives – lives filled with stories of hardship, deprivation, and trauma – not necessarily knowing how their stories began or what the outcome will be, but offering help along the way.

One story in particular brings a smile to Dekker's face.

A mother, her sister, and her young son had fled from one country in Africa to another. Because their situation was so difficult, CRWRC had submitted an application for them even though no church had yet been found to sponsor them. Dekker, 56, kept that family forefront in her mind since she knew that if they were approved to come to Canada, a church must immediately be found to receive them.

Several months later, she received a letter from an African man who had fled to Thailand.

"While I receive many more letters of request than I can ever respond to," Dekker says, "I did respond to that letter and asked Joshua – not his real name – to tell me his story and complete our application form. He did so. I read the story which was many pages long – an overwhelming tale of struggle, death of companions, imprisonment, and flight. When I got to the middle of the story, I read that he had a wife and young son. When I saw the name of his wife, I suddenly realized that he was the husband of the woman that we had sponsored. In fact, his name and birth date were on her application form, but she didn't know if he was dead or alive. By that time I had the e-mail addresses of both Joshua and his wife. It was my amazing opportunity to let each know that the other was still alive!"

Because of an additional blow Joshua experienced, Dekker is convinced that God has a plan for this man and his family, and intends to reunite them in Canada.

"This past Christmas," she says, "Joshua was invited by a Christian family in Bangkok to celebrate with them in their small village near Phuket. They were returning down the mountain on December 26 just as the tsunami hit. All but one child of the family were carried away by the tsunami. Joshua clung to a coconut tree, was brought to higher ground, and survived. Afterward he asked, 'Why did I have to suffer one more thing after all I have been through?'"

Dekker wonders, "What has God spared Joshua's life for yet one more time?"

A church in Western Canada has agreed to sponsor Joshua and his wife, and will care for them when they arrive in Canada.

Dekker became CRWRC's Refugee Coordinator In February 2004 after Rev. Arie Van Eek retired after 25 years of service.

"I had been seeking a way to continue a path of service since my husband and I moved to St. Catharines," she says. "As well, I knew in my heart that this was the work God was calling me to do."

The work was a good fit with the training she had received in Clinical Pastoral Education, with her previous "word and deed ministry" experience at the Thunder Bay Christian Community Center, and with previous volunteer work experience with refugees in Edmonton.

Canada is the only country in the world which allows the private sponsorship of refugees from overseas, Dekker explains. The CRWRC holds a sponsorship agreement with the government of Canada, which she administers along with her associate, Theresa de Roos.

One of Dekker's main tasks is to encourage Canadian Christian Reformed churches (CRC) to sponsor refugees.

She also assists families or individuals – now permanent residents of Canada – to sponsor family members who have fled their native lands. Recently CRWRC has submitted applications on behalf of many Christian families that have fled Iraq, and are now residing in Syria or Jordan.

Dekker also advocates for just treatment of refugees through her participation in the Canadian Council for Refugees (a non-government agency) and Kairos (an ecumenical church organization).

"A serious issue we have been facing as sponsorship agreement holders is the unconscionably long processing times of applications submitted to Citizenship and Immigration Canada," she says. "Target numbers set by the government have not been reached over the last few years. Backlogs of applications at the visa posts overseas contribute to average waits of over two years for refugees overseas who are living outside of their own countries with no means of support, either in refugee camps or in large urban centers. There they are often subject to violence and abject poverty."

Facing long processing times is just one of the challenges of Dekker's work. Another involves the difficulty of evaluating applications according to greatest need. Interviewing officials do not always agree with CRWRC's evaluation of the urgency of certain refugees' cases.

Dekker's interaction with government bureaucracy has been "discouraging." She

See **Stranger** *p. 15...*

Water ... *continued*

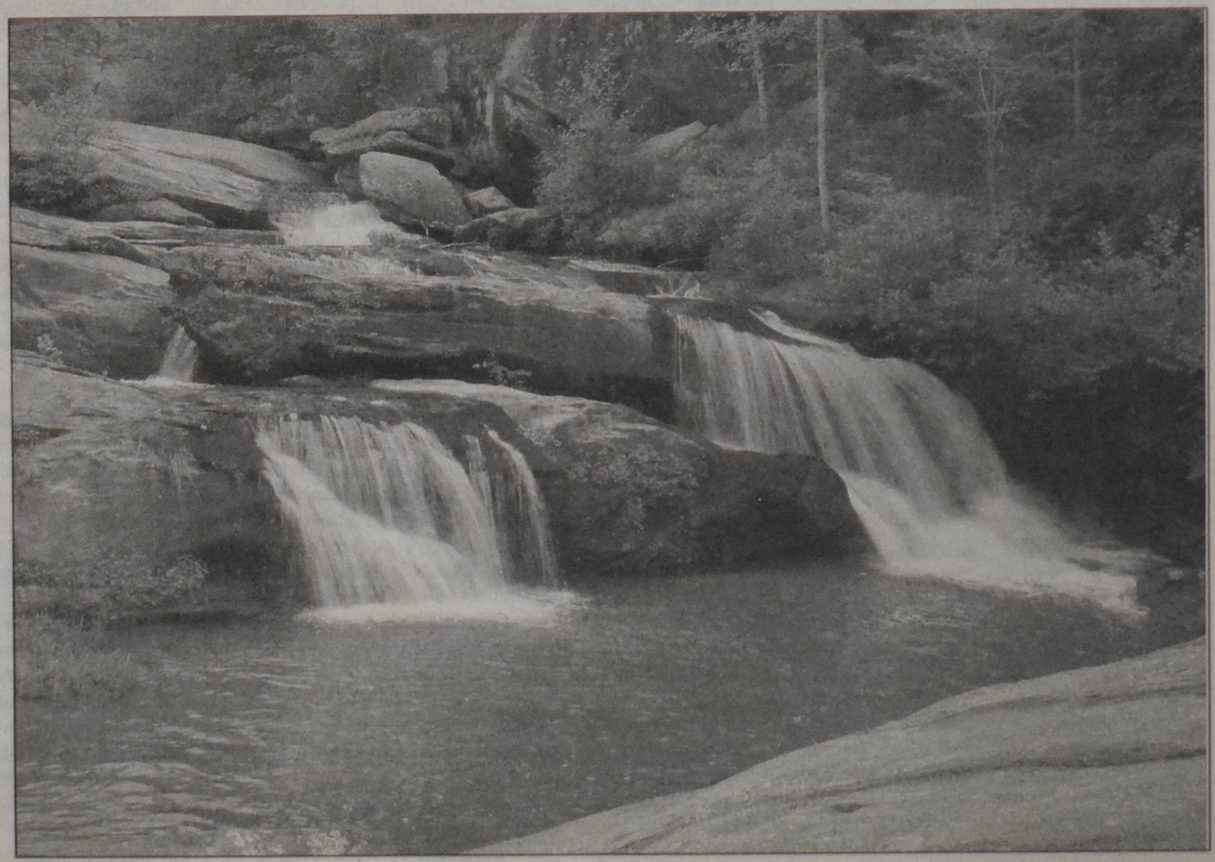
and telling parables, he often used water to illustrate the Christian life. When he died, both blood and water gushed forth from his body when pierced by the sword.

The New Testament water – as metaphor – is never so clearly used as in John 4. When Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well and asks for a drink, she expresses her dismay that a Jew would ask her – a Samaritan woman – for a drink, to which Jesus replies: "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water?"

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

As long as this world – steeped in sin – goes on, water will continue to destroy. But when Jesus returns, his living water – distilled to perfection – will live on for eternity. No more floods. No more waves. No more tsunamis. No more drowning. Indeed, no more death. When that living water pours forth, a rainbow will arch itself over the new creation. And it will never fade.



Biblical wisdom

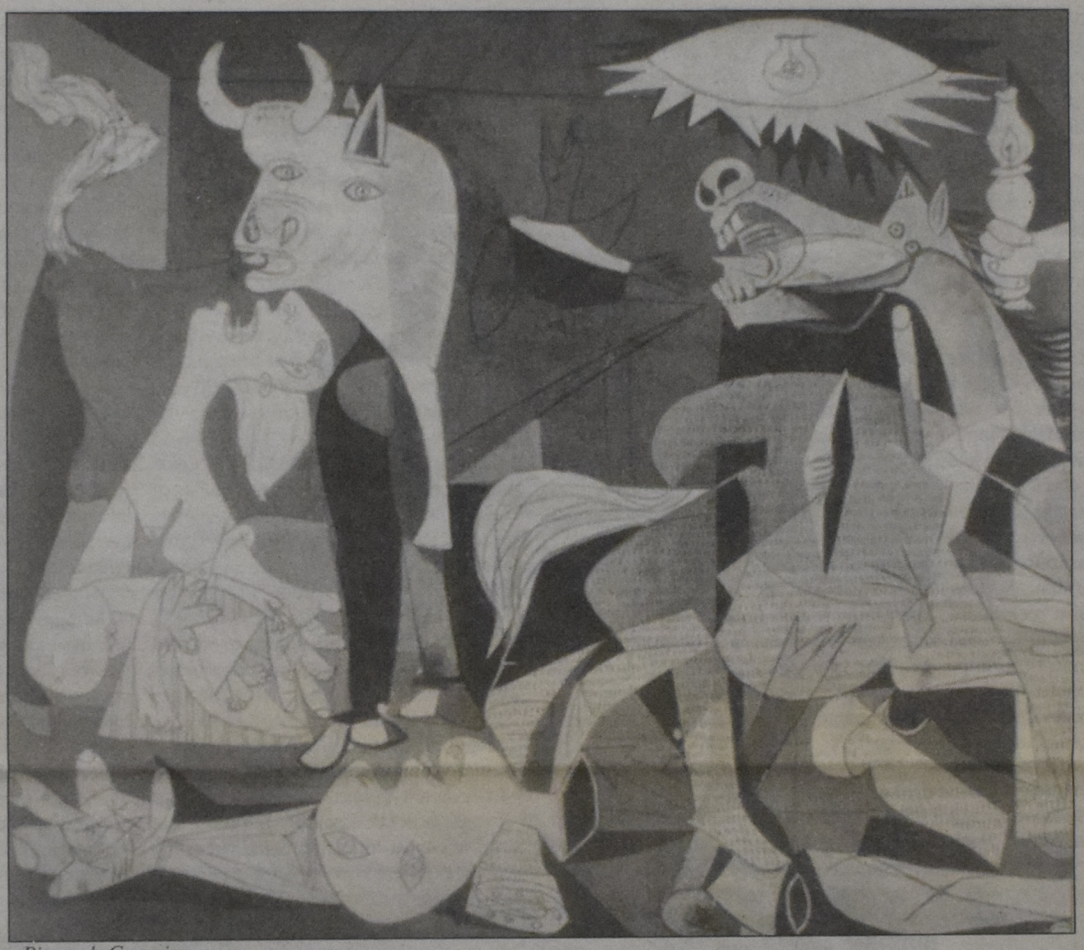
Wisdom provides no comfort

A.A. Van Ruler

Then I said in my heart. As it happeneth to the fool, so will it happen even to me; and why was I then more wise? (KJV)

Then I thought in my heart, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?" (NIV)

Ecclesiastes 2:15



Picasso's Guernica

What happens to the fool also happens to the wise. The Preacher means that both share the same fate – death. At a given moment death will come not only to the fool, but also to the wise, that is, to those who are good, solid, useful and worthy.

This thought can, quite unintentionally, begin to preoccupy our minds. Isn't there really an enormous amount of waste in this passage from life to death? How much wisdom and insight, how much valuable experience is lost when a wise person dies! The next generations have to get along without him. In many respects, they have to begin all over from the beginning.

This is, to put it mildly, not very economical. It does, to be sure, engender greater energy and effort. But, still, there is something very strange about it all.

Closely related to this reaction of estrangement is another reaction – paralysis. A person may exert himself to no end in the course of his life. He may achieve a great deal, materially and spiritually. But sooner or later death inevitably puts an end to it.

When we are young, this fact never completely sinks in. We're aware of it, of course. We see it happening around us every day. It registers in our minds: it's a universal law – man is a mortal being and therefore everyone, including we ourselves, must someday cease to exist. But this doesn't really affect us. It really tells us nothing. It doesn't sink through into our hearts.

But sometime after our fortieth birthday this begins to change. Then we inevitably begin to think about death. Then it also begins to sink into ourselves more deeply, with a greater reality. We begin to experience our selfhood, our existence, and everything we do as finite – as something that will come to an end.

Then we may be threatened by paralysis, at least inwardly. Outwardly we carry on as usual. We do our best; we continue to exert ourselves: we may even get ahead. But inwardly we think, What on earth am I pushing myself for, if it is all just temporary anyway?

This paralysis is also contained in the saying that all is vanity. It is something we must face head-on. Also inwardly. We have to learn to genuinely accept the fact that we are here only for a time. We must genuinely prepare ourselves. This is an important part of the art of living the godly, fruitful life to which the Bible points us: being wholly ready to live even though life is not divine and eternal but creaturely and finite. This is the heart of the matter.

Of course, we should also be ready to die. But that is not the most important thing. More important is our readiness for life, even though it is finite. We only know the true and full fear of the Lord when we learn to exist for a time with inward happiness because God so wills it.

However, there is another element in the text. First we noticed the estrangement that overwhelms us when we see that so much valuable experience goes to waste when a wise man passes on. Next we noted the paralysis that threatens to overwhelm us when we realize that at some time all our exertions must come to an end.

To this we must now add a third thought. When we become aware of the tremendous equalization that takes place at death, it awakens a certain degree of resentment in us. In death all men become equal. All differences are erased. Not just differences in possessions, power and status, but also differences in wisdom and foolishness, in virtue and wickedness.

This is the real point of the text. "What fate of the fool will overtake me too. What then have I gained by being wise?"

The Preacher doesn't wish to deny the fact that in life there's a great difference between wisdom and foolishness, nor that wisdom is much to be preferred to foolishness. He observes: "The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in darkness" (2:14). He means that wisdom enables us to know how things are. We may discover that they are worthless. But to know this with the clarity of full consciousness is always better than to live blindly without any awareness of the value or valuelessness of life.

However, in death even this value – the light of wisdom – is extinguished. There is something about this idea that we instinctively find repugnant. Don't we feel it to be unfair? Or are we surprised by the possibility that the light of consciousness gets extinguished? Then we have reason to be surprised every evening. For isn't the fact that we fall asleep every night a miracle? All the machinery of our thinking, feeling and willing existence comes to a halt, at least partly. But in the morning we awake to find that we still exist, and the factory again resumes full operation.

What occurs in sleep, however, is but a faint shadow of what occurs at death. For then not only the light of consciousness but also the light of life is extinguished. This happens to each and every one of us. Death thus appears to be the most perfect democracy – a wholly equal justice for all. Yet there is something frightening about this democracy of death – as there is, in fact, about all democracy.

This observation by the Preacher also suggests several other notions. After we die, nearly every person has a successor, an heir – either our children or someone else. This successor has done nothing to earn it; his inheritance simply drops in his lap. This is true not only on an individual level in terms of inheritances, but it is also true for entire generations that follow. They receive all sorts of things free of charge from the preceding generation. This too is part of the vanity of things.

As if this were not enough, it is by no means certain that succeeding generations will treat these things with the same degree of care and wisdom which the preceding generation devoted to them. The foolishness of the next generation can easily nullify the wisdom of the one before. This too is vanity.

There is yet a third thought. In the time to come everything that once was will be forgotten, so that eventually even the wise will no longer be remembered. Doesn't this show the vanity and therefore the absurdity of wisdom?

So when we contemplate life, we are forced to ponder quite a few difficult and bitter facts. We cannot avoid them. And there is little to gainsay them. Nevertheless, we must go on living and be ready to live.

They may even arouse in us a certain aversion to life (2:17). But this must be overcome. For even in your aversion to life, you will still have to live – unless you commit suicide. But the Preacher doesn't even raise that possibility. He has far too much respect for God the Creator.

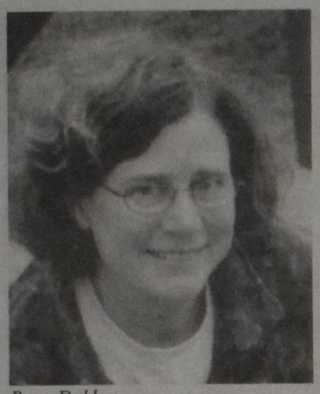
Life is a gift. Therefore, no matter how absurd it may appear, we may not rob ourselves of it.

Stranger ... *continued from p. 13*

points out that local Canadian immigration officials, though helpful and polite, struggle with workloads that they can't adequately respond to, and they don't control the outcomes of sponsorships they process.

Also, senior ranking immigration authorities often fail to satisfactorily answer crucial questions put to them by refugee advocates.

"At the recent consultation of the Canadian Council for Refugees in Victoria," Dekker recalls, "several immigration authorities were present, but did not answer questions satisfactorily. When confronted with the question about the huge backlog of applications and the long waiting times for arrivals, they denied that it was due to lack of resources overseas, but the fault of the private sponsoring organizations for submitting too many sponsorships. This, in spite of the fact that target numbers of around 3500 were not reached last year, nor in previous years. When pushed about the low target numbers, the immigration officials said that it was beyond their control as the numbers are set by parliament."



Rose Dekker

Also, Dekker encounters the challenge of dealing with the sheer enormity of the world-wide refugee situation; approximately 17 million people are designated as refugees.

"The number of refugees is overwhelming and the suffering of the people is horrendous," she says. "I wish I could do more. I wish churches could do more."

Dekker states that though many congregations pursue refugee sponsorship, many others are either not in a position to do so or are not interested.

"We live in an affluent culture. People who have become refugees have often left good, productive lives and homes through no fault of their own; they are innocent victims. As Christians, I believe we are called by God to offer hospitality and generosity to those who are suffering. Even though one church sponsoring one family is just a drop in the ocean of suffering, yet it will make a profound difference for that one family."

When churches agree to sponsor refugees, Dekker honestly and clearly delineates for them some of the challenges they will face. Churches are responsible for the refugees for 12 months after their arrival in Canada or until they become self-supporting, whichever comes first – providing housing, financial resources, emotional and spiritual support, and much more. Members of refugee committees and congregations must stretch out of their comfort zones as they learn to relate to people who have suffered much trauma in their countries of origin, and face new tensions and anxieties as they struggle to adapt to a new culture.

Dekker asserts that sponsorship, though challenging and taxing at times, is also rewarding.

"When I talk with members of refugee committees from churches, I hear about some of the difficult issues, but almost invariably I hear a note of gratitude that God has called them to carry out such an important and meaningful task. Often the committee members grow in their relationship to God and in their dedication to the kingdom of God as expressed through this work."

For individuals or church groups who want to learn more about assisting refugees, Dekker recommends two books. The first is *The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come to Our Town* by Mary Pipher (Harcourt Books, 2002). The second is *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* by Christine D. Pohl (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999). Though *Making Room* isn't specifically about refugees, Dekker says, the topic of hospitality relates to how refugees are welcomed.

Any *Christian Courier* readers who are interested in learning more about refugee sponsorship or in sponsoring refugees, please contact Dekker at CRWRC 800-730-3490 or 905-336-8344, or at dekkerr@crcna.ca

Healing words

BuildingTrust
Vicky Van Andel Ed.

Vicky Van Andel

From my experience, the world's best lay psychiatrists are hairdressers and shoe polishers. Hairdressers know how to listen and give logical advice and shoe polishers share life experiences that offer a renewed perspective. Both have helped me look at my life a little bit differently.

My experience with shoe polishers has been mostly at airports. When I notice a shoe polisher I look down at my shoes to see if they could use a shine before I go on my trip. Usually they do. Then I sit down and make a deal. It usually costs me ten dollars to have my shoes shined in Canada or the United States. Ten dollars sounds like a lot of money for something I could do at home for next to nothing. The reality is that I tend not to shine my shoes at home. I'm not into the old Dutch Saturday evening routine of lining up the shoes and polishing them for church on Sunday. I also know that shoe shiners do a far better job than I ever could myself. My shoes stay shiny for up to three months after I get them done at airports

I also often get an added bonus from a shoe polisher. They offer me their outlook on life. I ask them about their lives and they give me elaborate answers. The last time I talked to a shoe shiner he told me how privileged he felt to live in Canada. He was born in El Salvador and immigrated to Canada via a refugee program at a church.

"Canada offers many opportunities and is a great place to raise children," he said.

His comments jolted me out of my preoccupations and led me to be more aware of my blessings. I commented on the good job he was doing.

"I like to work hard." he said. "Not working hard means not having enough money in my pocket for my family."

I visit my hairdresser every six weeks. Her name is Connie and I have known her for 17 years. Each time we see each other we catch up on our lives. She is the only person who knows for sure the true color of my hair. She always encourages me to give nature a helping hand at this point in my life. I asked her once if I should start going au naturel. "My friends are suggesting it is time I consider it," I said naively.

Her response was firm. "Your hair is not about your friends. It's about you. What do you want to do?"

I told her I had no idea what I should do about my hair. "I leave it up to you."

She keeps coloring it. "It allows you to look younger," she says.

I must say that I always make a conscious effort to be upfront about my age. I think it is a sign of good mental health to be able to admit how old we are. In spite of my convictions I'm letting the hair thing go.

As Connie works on my hair she starts talking about the latest developments in her family. She tells me what her husband, son and daughter are up to, and about the books she has read. Then I tell her about my life. This past visit, that turned out to be quite a long story. I told her that three things were going on for me: I am between jobs, my husband just had triple bypass surgery and my daughter expects to deliver her baby any time.

"My daughter has three sons." I said. "She doesn't know the gender of the new baby. She also has four brothers, a husband and a father. Of course we are praying for a healthy baby."

"I get it," responded Connie reassuringly. "Phone me when the baby is born. I'd love to hear about it."

Connie knows how to listen to my feelings as I am talking. She tells me it is OK to feel worried about my husband, reflective about my career, and concerned about my daughter.

"You're a human being," she says. "You have a right to all your feelings." Then she asks me when I last cooked a meal for myself. "Are you eating properly? Are you taking care of yourself?" I tell her I am OK.

I also tell her I am worried about my husband's recovery and wonder what it's going to be like to be home for the next few months and to try to find a new routine. I even confidentially tell her that I said to my husband that I promise to be his best possible nurse if he promises to be my best possible patient.

"Is that fair to ask?" I say.

"Yes," she answers confidently. "It's the only way." Her reassurance relieves my anxiety and guilt.

That's why Connie is my favorite psychiatrist. I feel better after I have talked with her. She accepts and validates me and does so unconditionally. When difficult things happen it is not hard for us to get mixed up and lose our bearings, to become confused and conflicted. Then we need people who accept us just as we are. We also need people who help us not take things for granted, to remind us of the good things in life. That could be the person shining our shoes.

I know that for a while I have to take life a day at a time. I have to keep my feet on the ground and stay centered. I also know I need the love of my children, my family and my friends. And I am receiving it in abundance, each and every day. I am comforted by it. I am grateful my husband's life was spared and that he was able to receive the best medical care on very short notice. I know God is good and trust God will guide my path in the way it should go.

One day after this article was submitted a grandchild – Leah Joy – was born to Vicky.
Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via fax at 1-780-473-0970 or e-mail at vickyv@telus.net

To make the improving of our own character our central aim
is hardly the highest kind of goodness.
True goodness forgets itself and goes out to do the right thing
for no other reason than that it is right.... Lesslie Newbigin

Helping others

One man's mission to bring relief to cut-off villages

Daniel B. Wood

LHOKRUET, INDONESIA – With binoculars pressed to his eyes, Sam Schultz stands at the captain's helm of the Sumber Rejeki Baru, a 100-ft. Cargo boat bobbing off the coast of Sumatra. For several hours, the vessel has coasted alongside a mist-kissed rainforest – a paradise stained at its base by a 30-foot-high ring of barren earth.

Hundreds of miles of shoreline have been denuded; only a brownish brine is left. A coastal road has been scraped away, and palm trees and bridges clog beaches.

"This is unbelievable," says Mr. Schultz, a onetime Californian who has lived in Bali for 20 years. "A month ago, this was a shoreline of thriving communities, boats, villages, and fishermen. Now ... nothing."

Schultz is a regular guy: husband, father of two, businessman, history buff. But the cargo on his boat – buckets filled with hammers and saws, stacks of corrugated roofing, food, and toys – tells the story of how the steely housing contractor, galvanized by the devastation on TV – transformed himself into a kind of archangel of aid. A veteran of aid missions – East Timor, Guatemala, Nepal – he says the current need is "greater than any I have seen in our lifetimes."

Putting his own time and money on the line, intercepting and coordinating other Good Samaritans, Schultz and a handful of others have tackled the improbable and the impossible to provide immediate assistance to Sumatran villages that have lost their traditional sources of food and supplies and are difficult to reach by air.

For the team on the Sumber Rejeki Baru, that meant taking on the role of a marine-based search-and-rescue team – charitable entrepreneurs who can move nimbly while the giant aid groups got into gear.

"This is one of the really amazing stories of how people from all kinds of organizations all over the world have come together to come up with unusual solutions ... to fill immediate needs," says Bettina Luescher, spokeswoman in Banda Aceh for the World Food Program, the largest provider of food relief in the world. "These people are the crucial link at the crucial stage, doing what the larger organizations are just not yet set up to do."

Just minutes after watching pictures of the tsunami, Schultz got on the phone. First he called friends ("What should we do?"), then a local aid organization ("I'm ready if you need me").

Then he bought a plane ticket – along with his best friend, Lee – to Padang, a small town on the East coast of Sumatra.

A "people person" who speaks fluent Indonesian, and self-professed "pushy guy who gets what I want, and I want to help," Schultz, along with his pal, began buying 6-1/2 gallon buckets. With a dozen volunteers from a hotel in Padang, they filled them one by one: tarpaulin, cooking pot, oil, soap, saw, axe. ("I know what people who have lost everything need," he says.)

While looking for a way to transport these kits to devastated areas, Schultz met two representatives from AUSAID, the Australian aid agency, at a local bar. Teaming up, the trio flew a quick reconnaissance mission north to Sibolga, looking for a place to bring in deliveries. No good: bad roads, inaccessible airport, no goods on the ground to buy.

Next, Schultz tried to find local operators with a boat big enough to carry hundreds of tons of cargo but small enough to get into tiny, possibly damaged ports.

On the river in Padang, he spotted his quarry: the Sumber Rejeki Baru, ready with Indonesian captain and a crew of 14. Price: 60 million rupiah (about $6,000 US) per week. Contracting the boat in the name of AUSAID and IDEP, an Indonesian aid group, the foursome spent two days filling it with anything they could buy, requisition, or scrounge: nearly 800 lbs. of medicine, tons of rice, tools. With funding from IDEP, Bali friends, and Schultz's own wallet – about $40,000 total – the group began a series of trips up and down the coast.

On his first voyage, Schultz took five colleagues from Bali, three doctors, three Indonesian nurses and two volunteers.

They visited several small villages, taking a small dinghy ashore to locate and talk to local Indonesian military officials about casualties and to assess needs. The crew settled on the final destination of Calang (pronounced Chalang) – a town of 14,000 that lost all but about 3,500 residents.

On board for Schultz's first voyage was Stefan Zawada, a Polish chef, motorcycle buff, and Rotary Club member from Bali who had done similar work in Yugoslavia. The Rotary Club and his restaurant, Pergola, are supporting his mission. "They need help, man," he says. "We are showing our fellow human beings that we care.... We might need help someday and maybe it will come back. If not, it's worthwhile anyway."

While doctors and nurses ministered to survivors on shore in Calang, Zawada filled a sack with medical supplies and headed inland on foot. He got as far as a bridge that had been lifted 30 feet upriver and turned on its side. Crawling across on his knees, he encountered dozens of survivors, old and young living beneath a canopy of trees filled with scores of bodies.

Zawada doled out medicine, water, protein bars, and chocolate. He helped dress wounds before retracing his steps.

Meanwhile, Schultz met the military commander in charge of Calang. "He told me that if I was another aid organization here to do another assessment of needs, to just get on my boat and get the hell out of here," says Schultz. "He had had it with all these people flying in to do nothing but take up his time and energy ... adding to his security problems.... He didn't like it."

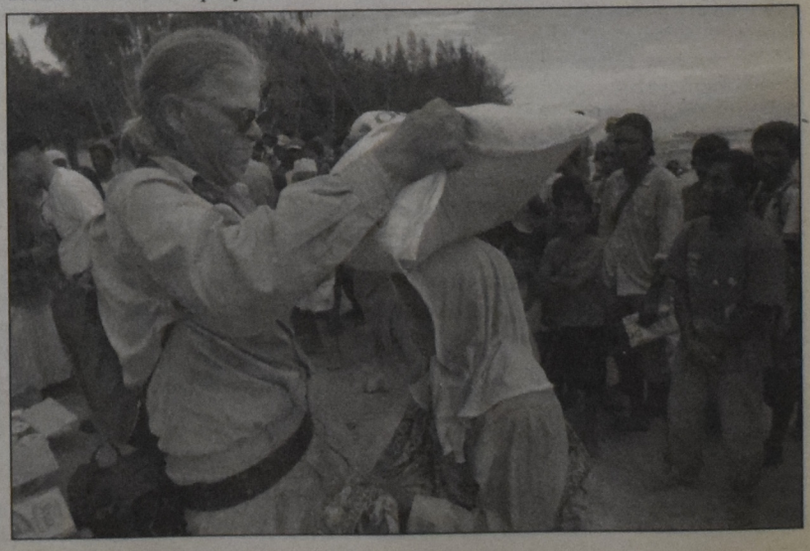
The crew offloaded their buckets of tools and 40 tons of rice in Calang over three days. Then Schultz and company headed to Banda Aceh for more volunteers, aid workers, and cargo.

Jonas Wiahl, a Swede who works with German Agro Action, had also seen the tsunami on TV and made his way to Banda Aceh. Like Schultz, he scoured the region for goods and volunteers. Then he used his own NGO's funds to purchase sugar, salt, cooking oil, and toys. He and his partner ended up spending $13,000 on tarpaulins, cooking pots, stoves, kerosene, and thousands of dolls.

When he met Schultz and Zawada at the dock, he decided to share costs – and the Sumber Rejeki Baru headed out again.

The boat, which hosts the occasional rat and four-inch cockroach, is the kind that inspires jokes, the sort that aren't funny on land but somehow keep a full deck of hot and weary aid workers, journalists, and translators in stitches of laughter. "This is a boat you don't want to board at first glance," says one crew member.

"At the second glance, you really don't want to board," says another. "If you get close enough for a third glance, it's too late



Helping others

– they've set sail," laughs a third.

But compared with some of the rusting – and far smaller – trawlers that pass by, overloaded with refugees, the Sumber Rejeki Baru looks like the Queen Mary.

Over the next several hours, Schultz and Zawada survey the landscape through binoculars, trying to find a landing spot. By about 5 p.m., the ship anchors just south of Lamno, at Lhokruet.

Onshore reconnaissance at dusk reveals that 200 to 300 people show up on these shores every morning. Schultz also comes face to face with a commander of the Indonesian military waiting with about a dozen automatic rifle-toting troops. Schultz talks with them, and offers them boxes of cigarettes. Meanwhile, Zawada heads up a road, returning two hours later with news that about a dozen separatist rebels are staying in the hills. Their presence complicates the operation that will unfold the next morning.

After a night so hot that most people sleep on the deck, Schultz, Wiahl, and others take a single skiff boat ashore at 6 a.m. to prepare to distribute aid. Separately, in a dinghy, the Indonesian crew ferries supplies to the beach. Zawada takes another small skiff up the coast, bailing water as he goes, to hike further inland.

Back at the beach of Lhokruet, no villagers have appeared by 8 a.m. By 9 a.m. only a handful of women have shown up. Schultz surmises that it is the presence of separatist guerrillas known as GAM that has kept people away.

GAM is a guerrilla force of about 3,000, backed by another 9,000 who might be prepared to fight for independence, in a conflict that has endured for 30 years. Supporters are sprinkled throughout the province, providing an added tension to the aid process.

Just before the tsunami hit, the Indonesian military had vowed to "exterminate" the rebels, and was undertaking an offensive. The tsunami has brought a formal cease-fire, but several skirmishes have been reported around Banda Aceh.

"This area has been under martial law for the past two years, so it is understandable that the men [in the villages] are afraid. They don't know what's going to happen," Schultz says.

But by about 9:30, a string of women and children appear, walking down a road out of the forest. They say they have come from a village 3 1/2 miles away.

Schultz, Wiahl, and others begin to organize the gathering crowd into a long line and then distribute the waiting goods individually, to each person in line. "Entre, entre, entre (line up, line up, line up!)" yells Schultz, telling the women how to proceed. "Mundur, mundur (step back)," he tells the few younger boys.

Schultz is clear about who should get the aid. "I want to get these goods into the hands of women because I know they will not hoard it for themselves," he says. "With the males, I can't be sure."

The women place 40 lb. bags of rice on their heads, gather tubes of toothpaste, hand soap, bottles of oil, apple juice and disappear down the road.

Some of the women carry the goods out of sight, and then return for more. One displays her 18-day-old baby whom she named Rahmat ("blessed") Tsunami.

The villagers reveal that they have plenty of rice, which has been dropped off by US helicopters and is sitting in a wood-covered compound on the adjacent hill. What they haven't had – until now – are other essentials: soap, soap powder, antiseptic, tarps, stoves.

One 16-year-old girl named Kaida, wearing a green scarf, smiles as she fills her arms with Lifebuoy soap and Pepsodent.

A 16-year-old boy, Rafid, emerges to explain that no one in his village was killed by the tsunami, but that the villagers have no food. Beside him, an older woman tears open a plastic bag filled with six soccer balls that have gone unnoticed by the gathering crowd. "This ball is for me," she giggles.

Then, because the beach at Lhokruet is too small to offload 1,700 sheets of corrugated roof iron – and Schultz knows the need is greater at Calang – Schultz decides to disembark.

Two hours later, at dusk, the ship pulls into harbor at Calang. Schultz sees progress from his earlier visit. There are more tents and more people on land, and more boats offshore.

But there is still frustration and confusion, nearly one month after the tsunami. Only four German doctors are there, along with a French medical team and a couple of Irish medics. There is an Indonesian tanker carrying 300 tons of supplies – which it can't offload because they don't have the right equipment and there's no dock. A group of Indonesians in a wooden skiff is ferrying stacks of clothes onshore. Suddenly they become frustrated and begin throwing them in the water.

"This is more evidence that no one knows what is going on in Calang," says Schultz. "Otherwise they wouldn't have sent a ship that big, with cargo that can't [easily] be taken ashore."

Onshore, he surveys the situation and is remembered by the Indonesian commander, who orders two marine amphibious transports to help offload his cargo.

One of the German doctors, a man called "Fish," curses the inefficiency of large aid groups that still have no presence in Calang.

"Everything is going to Meulaboh and Banda Aceh, and we have nothing," he says. A package with 3,500 units of measles vaccine was left unopened in a tent 50 yards away from where doctors and nurses were waiting to vaccinate waiting children. In the confusion, no one opened it until its expiration date had passed.

Back on the boat, Schultz, Zawada, Wiahl, and others say that things have gotten much better ashore but remain at an emergency level.

Stefan Templeton, an American member of a French dive-and-rescue unit, says the frustration there is compounded because teams of medics are waiting nearby to get into Calang, but "the helicopters remain full of journalists who come to take pictures and leave, and assessors who just continue to fill out assessment forms."

"You can see that what is happening to help people here is only a tiny drop in the bucket of what has to happen," says Schultz. "And we must remember that patchwork aid is only a temporary measure. What these people need most is tools, fishhooks, nets ... things to set them back to a life of working for themselves.

"A person who is sitting on the beach or in a displaced-persons camp waiting for handouts is lost," he observes. "A person rebuilding his own life is found."

As he leaves Calang, Schultz is bone-tired, but he's already planning another misson. If he can put together a team, he'll head back to Banda Aceh, get more supplies, and travel again down the coast.

His motivation for a month of flat-out, 20-hour days is simple, he says. He is inspired by his family's Quaker roots and his father's example of doing right by others.

"The Quakers' real name is Society of Friends," he says, "and we treat everyone we deal with as if they are our friend. My friends are in trouble. That's it."

Daniel B. Wood is a writer for The Christian Science Monitor.

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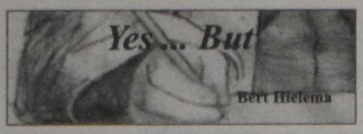

Zionism, End-Time religion, and inflation

I guess I am old-fashioned. At least in some ways. I have been married for more than 51 years to the same woman. That's old-fashioned. And still in love. For me marriage is like wine: the longer it's kept, the better it becomes. Accounts for a major portion of my good health.

During Valentine weekend I read all about those frustrated housewives in the suburbs. Is it really true that 50-80 percent of men have extra-marital affairs? What is true is that sex under those circumstances is bad for the heart. Nelson Rockefeller died that way. Too nerve wrecking. Too much emphasis on performance.

Today sex is a real source of hypocrisy: a lot of hullabaloo about an exposed breast – that Jackson woman – but constant ads for Viagra, boasting 4 hours of erection. I read in Christianity Today that among confirmed church goers, Pentecostals have the highest divorce rate – 44 percent – while Presbyterians have the lowest –a mere 27 percent. Most of it, I presume – I claim no experience there – starts with sex with other than legal spouses.

Why such a high divorce rate among couples who, before the altar, have made the solemn promise to stay with each other, no matter what? Perhaps the form should add: even when a more sexually attractive person comes along.

All this gives religion a bad name. Don't get me wrong. I am a very religious man, even though my ideas are not always mainstream. Slowly I am beginning to think that church pronouncements don't make much difference anymore: no amount of preaching – even the best – will change people. In religion also it's example, example, example. Not what we say counts. What we do matters. And there commercialism beaming its "Message" to us 7/24 wins. All the time.

One thing history teaches us is that we know in advance the mistakes we are going to make. We made them during the Crusades. We made them with the Inquisition. Islam is making them with the Jihad.

We are making them by preaching freedom in the form of "McWorld," – long live Viagra or Vioxx (no longer banned: too profitable) – imposing, by force if necessary, the American style of consumerism everywhere. America sets the tone for the world in culture, pollution, money matters. That's why analyzing its behavior is so important.

America's most popular interpretation of religion is very pro-Israel. Many Evangelicals regard any criticism of Israel and its behavior toward Palestinians as anti-American and anti-Semitic. Jerry Falwell claims that "to stand against Israel is to stand against God." The Christian Zionist movement, of which the House majority leader, Tom DeLay, is a leader in Washington, strongly believes that the Old Testament says that Israel is entitled to all of the land now claimed by the Palestinians. During DeLay's visit to Israel in 2003, the powerful Texas congressman told Israeli legislators that he was "an Israeli at heart."

Commented Saeb Erekat, a Palestinian legislator and negotiator, "DeLay is not helping the cause of peace by being more Israeli than the Israelis themselves." All this will prove troublesome for President Bush in giving the Palestinians a fair hearing, as his conservative Republican base strongly supports the Jewish state because of its interpretation of the Bible, fueled by theories about the End Times. Such beliefs, disregarding international law and generally recognized human rights, fit with the kind of neoconservative thinking to be found in the 1996 position paper "A Clean Break," written by Richard Perle and Douglas Feith, among others, which advised the Likud government to insist on "permanent control of the occupied territories."

I believe that the false religion of the Left Behind teaching is in many ways devastating. Everywhere you look, it's IOUs passed on to future generations. Record federal debt. Record foreign debt. Record budget deficits. Record trade deficits. Why worry about Kyoto and such minor little details like clean air, clean water, safe ports and the safety net when Jesus is going to give the world an *Extreme Makeover: Planet Edition* – another popular book – right after he finishes putting Satan in his place once and for all?

Is Senator Jim Jeffords, the ranking minority member on the Environment and Public Works Committee, correct in stating that: "I expect the Bush administration will go down in history as the greatest disaster for public health and the environment in the history of the United States?" It certainly applies to money matters. David Brooks, a conservative commentator, calls Bush: "Million Dollar Wise and Trillion Dollar Foolish." It's not hard to see why Bush has hopped aboard the Apocalypse Express. Acting like there's no tomorrow dovetails just as neatly with his corporate backers' rapacious desires as it does with his evangelical backers' rapturous desires. For him it makes good political sense also: it pleases his corporate donors and wins the hearts and votes of those believers who helped the president achieve a Second Coming of his own.

I repeat: America sets the tone for the world in culture, pollution, money matters. That's why analyzing its behavior is so important. Take inflation. Still slumbering, but soon to rise. Crucial in budget forecasting. Governments are budget-schizophrenic: often overstating expected income and lowballing disbursements. Our Canadian Government has this mental disorder in reverse, fortunately: for the past dozen of years or so, after detecting that Canada was fast on the way to becoming an economic basket case, Paul Martin and Chretien actually underestimated tax receipts so that the good result was increasing surpluses, unique in the weird world of state finances.

That's certainly not the case with our elephant neighbor. Or shall I label him our Goliath friend? Whatever. The nation everybody in the world is watching warily, is the USA and its 2006 budget, coming in at $2.57 billion. All eyes are especially focused on the deficit of $427 billion, a sum more than twice the entire Canadian Federal money outlay of $195 billion (Can). Of course, politician he is, Bush came with the usual promises that next year and the year thereafter, debt would decrease. This same refrain was heard also last year and the year before, and will again be part of next year's rhetoric.

One of the keys in budget calculations is the projected annual inflation. When a country has to borrow billions, if not trillions, even a small rise in the cost of living can foul the forecasts: one percent of a trillion dollar is $10 billion. With a total national debt estimated at $37 trillion, one percentage point rise means extra interest of $370 billion. That is about half of Canada's entire Gross Domestic Product. So a lot more than pocket money is at stake here.

Just imagine a two or three percent increase in inflation! The US government has assumed that 2.5 percent will be the average inflation rate for the next decade. How realistic is that, knowing that it was 3.3 percent in December? The February 7 *Economist* writes that "Measured by the growth in global credit or property prices, the world economy is experiencing a severe episode of inflation... Because households think they are wealthier, they spend more, and save and invest less."

Let me explain what this means. Rising house prices give greater borrowing power. A mortgage, which was $100,000 in 1999, can now be upped to $150,000, while carrying charges, thanks to low interest rates, are the same. So suddenly many have an extra $50,000 to spend, at no extra cost. Wonderful. This new money has prompted people to purchase better cars or enjoy expensive holiday trips. Fine and dandy, as long as inflation is flat. But if it flares up, so do monthly payments, while house prices drop.

Concludes the *Economist*: "the result (of inflation) is lower living standards tomorrow."

Let me backtrack a bit. Inflation rose from a little less than two percent in 1960 to 13 percent in 1979 and then gradually declined to less than two percent again in 2003. Rising living costs have always caused recessions.

The 13 years, from 1969 to 1982 when inflation peaked, saw four recessions. In 1982 unemployment was close to 11 percent. Since 1982 we've had only two mild economic downturns, so that in the last 23 years the economy expanded in all but 16 months. The basic cause, so writes economist Robert J. Samuelson, has been lower inflation.

It is my contention that this benign period is about to end. Inflation is back in the air, and it will make a lot of things worse, including the budget projections of Washington. Right now the data don't reflect it. The experts don't expect it.

House prices are not the only indication. Energy costs will grow. Of course. Demand will increase, thanks to China and India, while supplies will, at best, remain the same. I bet that in five years time gasoline will be $2.00 per litre, the rate now charged in Europe. Also, the growing percentage of older people will strain the system, inevitably requiring higher taxes and user fees. All this means less money in your pocket. Soon the omni-present dollar stores will change to "A Buck or Two."

China's prosperity will drive up demand for wages there and cost of commodities everywhere. Iron ore, just to mention one item, is expected to go up by some 40 percent this year. Coal, another basic ingredient in the steel industry, has doubled in price lately. Both steel and oil (plastic) are the basic building blocks of our economy. Plus wood, increasingly scarce as well.

Then there are these big deficits in the USA. They alone will drive up the cost of money as the USA must compete world-wide to satisfy its ever growing borrowing needs. I don't think we will see rates as high as the 15-20 percent 25 years ago, bankrupting many a household. But with the scores of trillions of debt floating about, even a small increase in interest will prove deadly for overstretched families, corporations and governments.

Here is some investment advice. I am not an expert, so I can be trusted. Perhaps. If you do have some extra money, buy some inflation-adjusted treasury bonds: the higher the inflation, the higher your return. They are called TIPS –Treasury Inflation-Protected-Securities. Better safe than sorry.

Previous columns and other writings can be seen at 'hielema.ca.'

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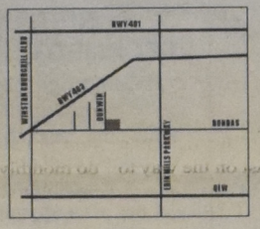

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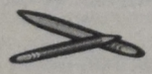

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went home to be with his Lord and Savior

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The courses for which applications are being sought are:

history/civics, Bible, art
learning skills/resource/careers
Physical education, English, science
technological education (shop), math, drama

Successful applicants will have the opportunity to teach in a variety of subject areas. Barrie, in the heart of Simcoe County, has a Christian community that is supportive of Christian secondary education. UNITY Christian High School is growing on a foundation of grace, purpose and vision.

Send applications, resumes and references to the principal,
Peter Bulthuis: pbulthuis@unitychristianhigh.ca
PH: (705) 792-6915; FAX: (705) 792-2389
460 Yonge St., Barrie, ON L4N 4E2
Application deadline: March 31, 2005
www.unitychristianhigh.ca

OTTAWA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

offers Christian education to 226 elementary school students from a diverse denominational background.

We are accepting applications from qualified Christian teachers for a possible **part time Junior/Intermediate** position. An ability to teach core French to Grades 5-8 is a prerequisite.

Interested applicants may forward their resumes and statements of faith to:

Mr. Paul Triemstra, Principal
Ottawa Christian School
2191 Benjamin Ave.
Ottawa, Ontario, K2A 1P6

Tel: (613) 722-5836
Fax: (613) 722-5836
Email: paul@ocschool.org
Website: www.ocschool.org

MARANATHA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
Windsor, Ontario
is diversifying its High School program in September 2005

Secondary Division
Dynamic teachers interested in a growing interdenominational school are invited to apply for FT position which includes: Mathematics, Computer Science, Business and some Administration.

Elementary Division
We invite applications for:
Resource (50%), French
(100% combined with French at the Secondary).

Send applications and complete resume to:
William Van Dyke, Principal
939 Northwood Street
Windsor ON N9E 2B4
Information: 519-966-7424; fax: 519-966-9519

CHATHAM CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

invites teachers, who demonstrate a passionate love for God and young people, to join our team beginning September, 2005. We are a growing school in a modern facility, supported by a strong Christian community. We seek applications for the 2005 - 2006 school year. Teachers with strengths in **English, History, and Math** are needed.

Please address your letter of application and resume to:
John Van Pelt, Chatham Christian High School
475 Keil Dr South phone: 519-352-4980
Chatham ON N7M 6L8 fax: 519-352-4041
E-mail: johnvanpelt@chathamchristian.ca

VERNON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

is an interdenominational Christian School located in the beautiful Okanagan Valley. It is comprised of an Elementary Campus that opened in 1978 and a Middle High School campus that opened in January of 2004. Our High School program is expanding to include grade 12 in September of 2005. We are seeking visionary teachers with pioneering spirits who want to provide educational leadership to a vibrant and growing Christian School community.

We presently have need of one **full-time elementary teacher**, one 50 percent **Music Teacher** for the Elementary School as well as **part-time staff** in our Middle High School in the following areas: Learning Assistance, Languages, Fine Arts and TESL.

For further information about Vernon Christian School, visit our website at www.vcs.ca

Please forward resumes and requests for information to:
Larry Simpson, Principal
6890 Pleasant Valley Road
Vernon BC V1B 3R5

Or by fax at 250-545-0254 or by e-mail at lsimpson@vcs.ca

PONOKA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

is in need of a **primary (Grades 1 - 2) teacher** for the 2005/2006 school year. PCS is a small interdenominational Christian school with an enthusiastic, competent teaching staff and a supportive school community. We require a committed Christian teacher who is enthusiastic about living, modeling and speaking his/her faith. Preference will be given to individuals with experience and/or training in Christian education.

Please send resumes or direct inquiries to:
Mr. R. Duggan, Principal, Ponoka Christian School
6300 - 50 ST Ponoka AB T4J 1V3
ph: 403 783-6563; fax:403 783-6687

THE IMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

an inter-denominational school system of over 700 students in Lethbridge, Alberta invites applications for the 2005/2006 school year for the following teaching positions.

- **Elementary Positions**
- **Band/Choir** (Gr. 5-12)

Please send a letter of application, resume & statement of faith to:

Mr. Henry Ronda, Principal
Immanuel Christian Elem.School
2010 - 5 Avenue North
Lethbridge Alberta T1H 0N5
Phone: (403) 317-7860
Fax: (403) 317-7862
Email: henry.ronda@christianed.ca

Mr. Ed DeYoung, Principal
Immanuel Christian High School
802 - 6 Avenue North
Lethbridge Alberta T1H 0S1
Phone: (403) 328-4783
Fax: (403) 327-6333
Email: ed.deyoung@christianed.ca

tdchristian

Toronto District Christian High School

Teachers needed for: **Business Math**
Math

Send resume and references to principal@tdchristian.ca or to 377 Woodbridge Ave, Woodbridge ON L4L 2V7

For more information please check the jobs page on our web site **www.tdchristian.ca**

See page 20 and 22 for more job opportunities.

Classifieds

Christian Labour Association of Canada

The Edmonton CLAC office is in need of a full time Solidarity Local Coordinator. This person will be working with the boards and members of our Alberta solidarity locals and developing student local(s). The successful applicant will also be working with local communities, MLAs, and community newspapers.

CLAC solidarity locals are made up of members of the Christian community who support the vision of CLAC, wish to work with others who share the vision, and help those in the developing world through the work of emerging Christian trade unions.

The individual must possess good public relations skills, be able to articulate CLAC's vision, and have good organizational skills. We are looking for someone who is willing to commit five years to this effort.

For a job description and expectation criteria or to submit a resume, contact Co Vanderlaan at (780) 454-6181 or fax at (780)451-3976 or email at *cvanderlaan@clac.ca.*

Excellent benefit package; wages commensurate with experience.

PARENT PROFESSIONALS

Mutual Support Systems of the Niagara Region, a non-profit agency providing residential care and treatment for children invites applications for the position of **House Parents.** An ideal career choice for a married couple to work together in meaningful ministry, these are full-time, salaried, live-in positions for both partners. Our House Parents are the heart and soul of the Mutual Support program. See our web site for more program information.

Please contact: **Randy Klassen**
Associate Dir. – Human Resources
792 Canboro Rd
Fenwick ON L0S 1C0
Tel: 905 892 4332
rklassen@mutualsupport.net
www.mutualsupport.net

Events

The *Distinguished Organists in Recital* Series

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In concert

SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2005 AT 3:00 PM

King and William Streets, Waterloo, Ontario

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Redeemer University College
is pleased to announce the inauguration of

Dr. Guenther Haas

as Professor of Religion and Theology

You are warmly invited to attend
the inaugural ceremony on
Friday, March 11, 2005,
at 7:30 pm in the Auditorium.
Standing reception will follow.

His inaugural address is entitled:
The Promise of Creational Ethics

777 Garner Road East
Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4
905-648-2131 x4414
mfaraga@redeemer.on.ca

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RRSP deposit limit is $15,500 for 2004.
With the 2004 deadline of March 1, 2005 fast approaching, consider making your 2004 contribution soon.

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"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
Matthew 11:28-30

March 18 Concert
Chris Teeuwsen, organ
& **Daniel Warren**, trumpet.
Friday 7:30 p.m. at **Hebron CRC, Whitby.** Admission $10.00

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TICO Registration #4499356

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 7 Pastors & others interested are invited to attend Redeemer University College's annual **Ministers' Conference.** We will be welcoming Dr. Craig Bartholomew, the H. Evan Runner Professor of Philosophy and Professor of Religion and Theology at Redeemer. Dr. Bartholomew, an ordained Anglican priest, will speak on the theme ***Prayer and the Pastor – Examining Prayer in the Gospel of Luke***. The registration cost of $25 per person (includes lunch) can be paid the day of the conference. Please register with Magda Beukes in the President's Office at 877-779-0913, locally at 905-648-2131 ext. 4208, or at mbeukes@redeemer.on.ca by February 28. Registration is at 9:30 am, opening devotions are at 10 a.m. and the day ends at about 3 p.m..

March 18 - 7:30 pm **Concert** Chris Teeuwsen, organ & Daniel Warren, trumpet. Hebron CRC, **Whitby**.Ad.$10.00

March 18, 19 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "DE RUIGE RITSELAARS" Een Klucht in 4 bedrijven door Hub Fober. **Woodstock**, Market Centre Theatre: Fri. at 8 pm & Sat. at 2pm and 8pm. See ad.

March 20 3:00 pm: Jonathan Oldengarm performs in the Distinguished Organists in Recital series at First United Church, King and William Streets, **Waterloo**, Ontario. The series celebrates the relocation and refurbishment of the 1971 Gabriel Kney organ formerly located in London's Aeolian Hall. ADMISSION: $20.00. For tickets, call the church office at 519-745-8487, or 578-4006 after 5 p.m.

March 20 - **Dutch Service** in **Ancaster** Christian Ref. Church at 3:00 pm. Rev. John Drost will be preaching.

March 27 - 7:30 p.m. **Dutch Easter Song Service** Emmanuel Ref. Church, 170 Clarke St, Woodstock Rev. Case Koolhaas will be leading the service. Babysitting. Refreshments served after. service.

April 8 - Beginnings Counselling & Adoption Services of Ontario holds its 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner. Hamilton District Chr. High School, 6:00 p.m. punch, 6:45 p.m. dinner, free will offering. Call 905-528-6665 by April 1st to make your reservation. See www.beginnings.ca for details.

April 8 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "DE RUIGE RITSELAARS", Een Klucht in 4 bedrijven door Hub Fober, at the Christian Heritage School, **Jordan** at 8 p.m. See ad for ticket information.

April 9 Concert of Sacred Music by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Bethel** CRC, 716 Classic Drive, **London** (Freewill offering) Info: (519) 637-4357

May 1 Concert of Sacred Music by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Knox** Presbyterian Church, 55 Hincks Street, **St. Thomas** (Freewill offering) Info: (519) 637-4357

May 7 Liberation Choir 60th Anniversary Concert, with the Guelph Symphony Orchestra, 7:30 at **Hamilton** Place. Tickets: $20, $30, $40. Available from choir members/ box office/ www.organs.ca

July 1-3 Nobleford CRC 100 year anniversary celebrations with picnic, banquet and services. For more information contact Bert/Pat Konynenbelt at (403)824-3442 or by e-mail at bpkbelt@telus.net

July 8-10 Charlottetown Christian Ref. Church will be celebrating 50 years of ministry. See ad below.

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1415 Upper Wellington Street, Hamilton, Ontario
email: office@wellingstone.ca www.wellingstone.ca

Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations" – Psalm 90:1

On July 1-3, 2005,
the **Nobleford CRC**
invites all former members and interested persons to join us in celebrating **100 years of God's faithfulness.**

A combined **picnic** with the Granum CRC is scheduled for July 1 at Park Lake with many planned activities. On Saturday, there will be a **historical tour** of the area followed by an open house at the original church now located in Picture Butte. A **banquet** will be held at the Nobleford Community Complex on Saturday at 6:30 p.m. On Sunday, the morning **worship service** will be held at the Community Complex at 10.00 a.m. with lunch to follow. A second service is planned for 1:30 p.m. at the Nobleford CRC.

Registration costs for the banquet will be $25.00 per person on or before April 30, 2005 and is limited to persons ages 13 and over. After April 30 the cost will be $30.00 per person. Please forward your registrations to Jackie Postman at Box 212, Nobleford AB T0L 1S0 and include the name(s) of those planning to attend the banquet. Make your cheque/money order payable to CRC of Nobleford Anniversary Fund.

For more **information** contact Bert/Pat Konynenbelt at (403)824-3442 or by e-mail at bpkbelt@telus.net

THE LIVING WORD

Sermons for reading services

This is the last year of the printed sermons.
For a supply of specially priced back copies contact:
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Woodstock, On N4V 1G1
Phone: (519)-539-2117
Email:
rvanderploeg@execulink.com
Sermons also available online:
www.crcna.org/whatweoffer/resources sermons/

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www.redeemer.on.ca stewardship@redeemer.on.ca

Charlottetown Christian Reformed Church

will be celebrating ***50 years*** of ministry on July10, 2005. Celebration activties will be on the weekend of **July 8-10**. For more information, contact the church office at **902-894-4721** or email: chtowncrc@pei.aibn.com.

MARANATHA HOMES

is an award-winning ***Senior Citizen Home*** located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church. Audio hook-up for the Sunday services is available in every apartment and there is a weekly evening video church service presentation.
Local bus service at the door. **Information available from:**
Rosanne van der Woerd
3260 New St. Unit 109
Burlington ON L7N 3L4
905-639-9054

For pictures and more information, go to our website at:
http://home.worldchat.com/~hordyk/MaranathaHomes.html

News Briefs

Palestine: home demolitions to stop

Some hopeful developments in the Mideast. Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon won cabinet approval for the withdrawal of Jewish settlers from the Gaza strip and a plan to reroute the wall so that it doesn't gobble up as much Palestinian land. An Israeli court has ruled that the wall as projected imposed too great a hardship on Palestinians. Many of the Jewish settlers, however, are expected to put up stiff resistance to any attempts to move them.

Earlier Israel pledged it would no longer demolish the homes of Palestinian militants. A committee concluded that the policy did Israel more harm than good by inflaming hatred. According to a Jewish human rights group, 675 Palestinian homes have been destroyed since 2000. That's the year the practice was resumed, after being discontinued in 1993.

Sudan: returnees need help

Refugees returning to southern Sudan after decades of civil war are encountering severe hardship. Everything is wrecked – roads, schools, clinics and other buildings. Finding water is also a problem. An estimated 600,000 have already returned, according to the UN. Money is badly needed to rebuild the infrastructure of the south. The UN is asking for 40 million to finance reconstruction.

An estimated 4 million people were displaced by the war and about 2 million were killed.

Cuba: Europe removes sanctions

The European Union has moved toward normalizing relations with Cuba by removing sanctions imposed 18 months ago. After Castro's crackdown on dissidents in 2003, Europe's Havana missions also began inviting dissidents to national day celebrations to pressure Castro to release the political prisoners. It has decided to stop the practice.

Cuba has released 14 of the 75 prisoners. Now critics of the Castro regime fear any pressure will be off to release the rest. Oswaldo Paya, a Cuban dissident leader, said this will hurt the fight for human rights in Cuba and makes Europeans accomplices to repression.

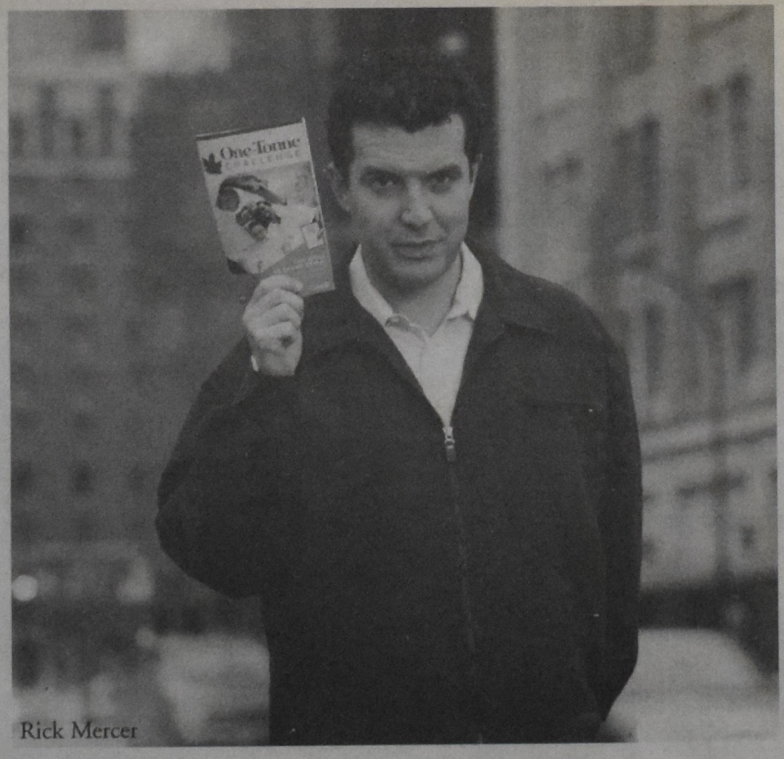
Many politicians from ex-communist states like Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic also opposed the thaw, as did The Netherlands. Vaclav Havel, former Czech president, condemned the move too.

Oswaldo Paya invited Cubans everywhere to engage in a dialogue about the future of Cuba after the death of Castro. He wants to include exiled Cubans as well as those Cubans now part of the government in planning a peaceful transition that will lead to a gradual democratization and opening up of the country.

Paya was the winner of the European Parliament's Andrei Sakharov human rights prize for attempting to seek moderate reforms in Cuba.

King's announces new major

The King's University College will soon offer a 4-year Bachelor of Arts degree with a combined Politics, History and Economics major. The program will focus on public life, meaning the way politics, government, civil society and economics work within the social order. The PHE major will give students an understanding of public life, ideas for tackling pressing issues in our culture, and awareness of how history has shaped Canada and the world. Students will gain insights and skills needed to influence, and even transform public life in Canada and internationally – encouraging students to pursue wisdom and greater justice for our economically divided and culturally plural world.



Rick Mercer

Every Canadian loves a challenge, right?

On average, each Canadian produces five tonnes of greenhouse gases a year. Driving, heating and cooling our homes, using appliances... almost anything we do that uses fossil fuels for energy also creates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. And these emissions are causing our climate to change.

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1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232), TTY 1 800 465-7735.

One-Tonne Challenge **Take action on climate change**

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